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A

HISTORY OF ENGLAND

FROM THE

CONCLUSION OF THE GREAT WAR IN 1815

BY

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IN TWO VOLUMES

VOL. I.

LONDON
LONGMANS, GREEN, AND CO.
1878

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PREFACE.

THESE two volumes form the commencement of a History of England which, it is proposed, should extend from the conclusion of the great European War in 1815 to a very recent time. No other period of English history is of greater interest to the historical student. During the first few years, which succeeded Waterloo, Englishmen enjoyed less real liberty than at any time since the Revolution of 1688. The great majority of the people had no voice in the Legislature. Political power was in the hands of a few fortunate individuals, who were bent on retaining the monopoly which they had secured. The taxpayers were laden with fiscal burdens which were both unequal and ill-devised. Death was the punishment which the law awarded to the gravest and most trivial crimes. The pauper was treated as a criminal, and the administration of the Poor Laws made almost every labourer a pauper. Harsh and oppressive as the laws already were, the oligarchy, by which England was governed, was continually demanding harsher and more oppressive legislation. During the five years which succeeded Waterloo the Habeas Corpus Act was suspended; the liberty of the Press was restricted; the right of public meeting was denied; domiciliary visits in search of arms were allowed. The

first volume of this work is an attempt to relate the history of the unhappy period during which these laws were made.

Soon after the accession of George IV. to the throne a new period of English history commenced. Mackintosh, following up the labours of Romilly, reformed the Criminal Code; Huskisson, adopting the doctrines of Adam Smith, reformed the commercial system; Canning, rejecting the principles of Castlereagh, reformed the policy of the Foreign Office; a Tory Government, abandoning the traditions of its party, emancipated the Roman Catholics and the Dissenters; and a Whig Ministry, at length succeeding to power, reformed the constitution of the House of Commons. These five great revolutions in law, in commerce, in foreign policy, in religion, and in internal politics were the memorable achievements of twelve years of progress. An attempt has been made to relate the history of these twelve years in the second volume of this work. It is proposed, in future volumes, to deal with the labours and doings of a Reformed Parliament.

It may possibly be objected to the plan of this work that the events of which it treats are too recent to be dealt with judicially. The same objection could, however, have been raised to some of the greatest histories which the world has yet seen. The Author relies for replying to it on the avowed intention of one great authority. Macaulay, when he commenced his immortal history, contemplated as a final halting-place the Reform Bill of 1832. If it were legitimate in 1848 to contemplate writing the history of 1832, it must be legitimate in 1878 to contemplate writing the history of 1862.

Objection may perhaps be also taken to the Author's method. It may be thought that one or two occurrences have been omitted from these volumes which ought to have been included in them. History may, undoubtedly, be written in two ways. The historian may, on the one hand, relate every event in the history of a nation in strict chronological order. He may, on the other hand, endeavour to deal with each subject in a separate episode. A good deal may probably be advanced in support of either of these methods. But, on the whole, the second of them seems preferable to the first. The Author, who deliberately adopts it, has, at any rate, the satisfaction of knowing that he has rejected the easier and adopted the more laborious method, and that his choice has not, therefore, been dictated by any consideration for his own convenience. In this work an endeavour will be made to deal with each subject separately; and, with this object, various matters, which had their origin before 1832, have been passed over for the present in silence, and reserved for future treatment in subsequent volumes.

LONDON: *August* 1878.

CONTENTS

OF

THE FIRST VOLUME.

CHAPTER I.

	PAGE
The Dawn after Waterloo	1
The Effects of the Great Revolutionary War	1
On France	2
On Austria	7
On Prussia	12
On Russia	13
On the Minor States of Europe	17
On the United Kingdom	18
Description of the United Kingdom	24
Its Population	25
The National Debt	28
The Sinking Fund	34
The Revenue	35
The Excise	37
The Customs	38
Other Branches of the Revenue	39
The Revenue and the Revolution of 1688	40
The Growth of the Revenue since the Revolution	42
The Irish Revenue	45
The Suspension of Cash Payments	46
The Bank of England	47
The Development of British Industry	50
The Trade in Wool	52
In Cotton	54
In Linen	66
In Silk	66
The Introduction of Steam as a Motive Power	68
Iron	71
Coal	73

PAGE
Population and the Rivers 76
The Invention of Canals 78
The Improvement of Roads 83
The Post Office 90
London 93
Dublin 98
Manchester 100
Liverpool 102
Glasgow 103
Edinburgh 104
Birmingham 105
The Development of British Commerce 108
The Colonial Possessions of England 110
Gibraltar 111
Malta 112
The Cape of Good Hope 113
The West Indies 115
Slavery 116
Wilberforce and the Slave Trade 118
The East Indies 122
The United States 127

CHAPTER II.

Effects of Travelling on Political Life in England . . 132
The House of Commons 134
The Borough Owners 135
County Constituencies 138
Borough Constituencies 140
Close Boroughs 141
Their Sale 142
Promoted by the Accumulation of Wealth . . . 143
Bribery 144
Expense of Elections 146
Election Petitions 146
Pensions and Sinecures 147
Peerages 149
The Evils of the System of Government . . . 150
Its solitary Advantages 151
The Education of the Higher Orders 152
'The Old English Gentleman' 154
Duels 155
Intemperance 156

PAGE
The Game Laws 157
The Corn Laws 161
Enclosure Bills 164
Improvements in Agriculture 165
Rise of Rents during the War 166
Declining Influence of the Landed Classes . . . 167
Real Property not applicable to Contract Debts . . 170
The Church of England 171
Non-Residence in the Church 172
The Bishops 173
Their Abuse of their Patronage 174
The Country Clergy 176
The Supremacy of the Church 177
The Labouring Classes 180
Their Wages 180
Their almost General Distress 181
The Poor Laws 182
The Law of Settlement 184
Parish Apprentices 186
Poor Law Discipline 188
The Criminal Classes 191
The Severity of the Criminal Code 192
Convicts and Prisons 195
Prison Reformers. John Howard 199
Elizabeth Fry 201
Jeremy Bentham and his 'Panopticon' 203
The Police 204
Blood-Money 206
Vagrants 208
Poachers and Smugglers 210
The Education of the Lower Orders 211
Vaccination 216
The Army 217
The Navy 224
The Piratical States of Barbary 227
The Expedition against Algiers 237

CHAPTER III.

The Rise of England during the Reign of George III. . . 240
The Characteristics of the Reign 241
The Character of George III. 242
Queen Charlotte 245

PAGE
The Prince of Wales 246
The Princess of Wales 248
Princess Charlotte 252
The Younger Sons of George III. 255
The Wellesley Family 260
The Elder Brother, Lord Wellesley 261
The Duke of Wellington 262
The Ministry 268
Its First Chief, the Duke of Portland 271
Its Second Chief, Perceval 272
Its Third Chief, Lord Liverpool 273
The Chancellor, Lord Eldon 276
The Home Secretary, Lord Sidmouth 280
The Leaders of the Opposition: Lord Grenville . . 282
Lord Grey 286
The Leader of the House of Commons, Lord Castlereagh . 288
Canning 292
The Leader of the Opposition, Ponsonby 298
Grattan 299
The Irish in Parliament 302
The Finance Minister, Vansittart 303
Bragge Bathurst 305
Robinson 307
The Opposition. Tierney 309
Brougham 310
Horner and Whitbread 313
Romilly 314
Charles Abbot, Lord Colchester 316
The Chief Justice, Lord Ellenborough 319
Sir Vicary Gibbs 321

CHAPTER IV.

English Literature 324
Intellectual Activity of the Eighteenth Century . . 326
Adam Smith 327
Jeremy Bentham 332
The French Revolution and the Reaction occasioned by it . 336
Malthus 338
Ricardo 339
Historical Literature 341
Mitford 342
Hallam 343

PAGE
Mackintosh 344
Revival of Poetry 346
Crabbe 348
Campbell 349
Scott 350
Southey 353
Coleridge 356
Wordsworth 357
Moore 360
Byron 362
Shelley 364
Literary Women 370
Effects of Christianity on Women 370
Women in the Middle Ages 371
Influence of Queen Charlotte 372
Capacity of Women for Novel-Writing 373
Maria Edgeworth 375
Frances Burney and Jane Austen 376
The Ultimate Consequences of Women's Work . . . 378
The Periodical Press 379
The Stamp Duty on Newspapers 380
The Principal Newspaper—the 'Times' . . . 381
The 'Courier' and the 'Post' 382
The 'Morning Chronicle' 383
Social Position of Journalists 383
The 'Edinburgh Review' 384
Sydney Smith 385
Jeffrey 386
Horner 386
Brougham 387
The 'Quarterly Review' 389
Its Editor, Gifford 389
Blackwood and Wilson 390
Cobbett 391
Concluding Remarks 394

CHAPTER V.

The Peace of 1815 398
The Effects of the War on Capital 398
On Trade 399
On Agriculture 400
On Labour 401

PAGE
Effects of the Peace 402
Aggravated by the Suspension of Cash Payments . . 403
Attitude of the Ministry 404
The Property Tax 404
Attack upon the Estimates 406
The Property Tax repealed 408
The War Malt Tax abandoned 410
The Weakness of the Ministry 411
Their Amended Financial Proposals 412
The Irish Revenues 412
Consolidation of the English and Irish Exchequers . . 413
Critical Condition of the Country 416
The Harvest fails 417
Universal Distress 418
Riots 419
Trial of the Rioters 421
Distress in the Coal and Iron Trades 422
Irritation at the Use of Machinery 423
The Radicals 425
Their Leader, 'Orator' Hunt 426
The Spa Fields Riot 428
Alarm at these Disturbances 432
The Ministry appoint Secret Committees of Inquiry . . 433
Their Reports lead to Repressive Measures in Great Britain . 435
Milder Measures adopted in Ireland 437
Cobbett leaves the Country 438
The March of the Blanketeers 440
The Risings in Yorkshire and Derby 441
Revival of the Secret Committees 443
Abortive Prosecutions 444
Trial of the Derby Rioters 446
Return of Prosperity 448
Measures of Retrenchment 449
Appointment of a Finance Committee 449
Its first Report, and the Reduction of Sinecures . . 451
The Finance Committee's Second Report 452
The Sinking Fund 453
Grants for Local Works 454
Institution of Savings Banks 455
Prosecution of Political Writers 456
The Prosecution of Wooler 460
The Three Trials of Hone 461
The Retirement of Lord Ellenborough 463

PAGE
Parliament Meets 464
The Secret Committees are revived 465
An Indemnity Act passed 466
Strike of the Lancashire Cotton Spinners . . . 467
The Budget of 1818 469
Grant to Spain for abolishing the Slave Trade . . 470
Grant for New Churches 471
The Alien Act 474
The Dissolution and General Election 476
Prospects of Increased Prosperity 478
The Resumption of Cash Payments 479
The Rise in the Value of Gold after 1808 . . . 480
The Bullion Committee of 1810 482
Bank Paper made Legal Tender 483
The Value of Gold after 1811 484
The Partial Resumption of Cash Payments in 1817 . . 484
The Currency Question in 1819 486
Robert Peel, Chairman of the Bank Committee . . 488
The Resumption of Cash Payments agreed to . . . 490
The True Nature of Money 491
Gold the True Standard of Value 496
Huskisson's Memorandum on Finance 497
Vansittart's Financial Policy 499
The Distress of 1819 501
Accompanied by a Fresh Agitation for Reform . . . 502
Motions for Reform in Parliament 503
Agitation for Reform in the Country 504
The Meeting at Peterloo 505
The Ministry approve the Conduct of the Magistrates . . 509
Indignation in the Country 512
Lord Fitzwilliam removed from the Lord Lieutenancy of Yorkshire 515
Divisions among the Opposition 515
'The Six Acts' 516
The Death of George III. 523
The Cato Street Conspiracy 524
The Riot at Glasgow 529
The Battle of Bonnymuir 530

CHAPTER VI.

Princess Charlotte in 1816 533
Her Marriage with Prince Leopold 534
Her Death 535

PAGE
Marriages in the Royal Family 538
Death of Queen Charlotte 541
Arrangements on her Death 542
Death of the Duke of Kent 544
Death of George III. 545
Serious Illness of George IV. 547
The Princess of Wales in Italy 547
Her Suite 549
Her Chamberlain, Bergami 550
Her Conduct 552
Her Husband's Anxiety for a Divorce 554
Encouraged by Vice-Chancellor Leach 555
The Milan Commission 557
Brougham, the Princess of Wales' Adviser . . . 558
His Desire for a Compromise 559
The Princess threatens to return Home . . . 561
Renews her Threat after the King's Death . . . 562
And after the Omission of her Name from the Liturgy . 563
Her Annoyance 566
Denman, her Solicitor-General 567
Alderman Wood, her Adviser 568
The Queen sets out for England 569
Refuses the Terms of the Ministry 570
She arrives in England 571
Her Progress to London 572
Her Popularity and its Causes 573
Action of the Ministry 575
Negotiations for a Compromise 577
They fail 580
Proceedings in the House of Lords 581
Report of the Secret Committee 583
The Queen's Progress to the Trial 584
The Scene in the House of Lords 586
The Counsel 587
The Trial 588
The Defence 590
The Queen's Witnesses 593
The Divorce Bill is read a Second Time . . . 595
And is abandoned 596
The Queen's Dejection after her Victory . . . 598
The Prorogation 599
Demonstrations during the Recess 600
Canning leaves the Ministry 601

PAGE
Peel refuses Office 604
Parliament meets 604
Decline of the Queen's Popularity 605
The Coronation of George IV. decided on . . . 606
The Queen's Claim to be crowned 608
And to attend the Coronation 609
Her Protest on being refused 610
She is refused Admission to the Abbey . . . 611
The Scene in Westminster Abbey 613
The Scene in Westminster Hall 614
The King's Visit to Ireland 616
The Queen's Death 618
Her Funeral 619
Sir Robert Wilson removed from the Army for his Conduct at it 621
The King lands at Dublin 623
His Reception by the Irish 624

INDEX 627

Errata.

Page	14	line	26	*for*	her	*read*	their
„	23	„	17	„	fourteen	„	twenty-four
„	236	„	26	„	which	„	whom
„	288	„	1	„	brother	„	nephew
„	410	„	25	„	Sutton Western	„	Western
„	533	„	13	„	ill-fated	„	fated
„	586	„	34	„	the four Peers	„	three of the four Peers
„	588	„	1	„	Parker	„	Parke

HISTORY OF ENGLAND.

CHAPTER I.

CHAP. I.

The dawn after Waterloo.

THE story of Waterloo forms the natural and appropriate conclusion of the long and exciting chapter of European history by which it is preceded. The dark war cloud, which had lowered for a quarter of a century over Europe, rolled away with the last wreath of smoke which hung over Napoleon's defeated and disorganised host. A long and cruel war was to be followed by a long and remarkable peace. A brighter dawn was to usher in a happier day. Countries, which had again and again been disfigured by the ruinous havoc of advancing and retreating battalions, were to smile anew. Men, who had been born and reared to manhood to feed the armies which ambition had enrolled or patriotism had organised, were to be permitted to devote their energies and abilities to the prosecution of peaceful industries. The ocean, the common thoroughfare of a world, was again to be opened to the flags of every nation. The old rivalry in arms was to be succeeded by a new rivalry in trade and industry. The ploughshare had been beaten, twenty-four years before, into the sword; the sword was to be converted into a pruning-hook.

The face of Europe had been rudely disfigured by the bloodshed and the burnings, the sieges and the massacres,

CHAP. I.

which had distinguished the twenty-four preceding years; but the map of Europe had not been materially changed by the victories and defeats which had taken place in the period. The conqueror of the world had been driven back within his original boundaries, and the title which arms had won had been lost in the shock of arms. The five great powers of Europe at the commencement of the war remained the five great powers at its close. Millions of lives had been wasted; untold treasure had been expended; the progress of civilisation had been checked; nearly every power on the Continent had been humbled in succession; and nearly every continental power found itself, at the close of the struggle, in very much the same position which it had occupied at its commencement.

France.

France had suffered more severely, and benefited more largely, than any other power from the protracted warfare which she herself had provoked. France seems destined by nature to occupy the first place among the nations of the Continent. The fertility of her soil, the excellence of her climate, the convenience of her situation, the capability of her harbours, the genius of her people, combine to give her a predominance in war and an advantage in trade. Three times in her history, under the guidance of wise monarchs, she has dictated laws to the whole of Europe. Again and again in her history the follies of her rulers have left her open to her enemies, or exposed her to the still more destructive effects of civil war. A hundred years before the great revolution of the eighteenth century a powerful monarch, admirably served by a succession of able ministers, had raised France to a position of unprecedented importance and power. Richelieu and Mazarin had increased the influence of their country abroad; Colbert had studded it with lasting monuments of the internal prosperity which he had himself fostered; Turenne and Luxembourg had won for its

arms the reputation of invincibility; the genius of Vauban had protected its territory with fortresses which seemed impregnable. The distant Russian had no power to interfere in the politics of Western Europe; the Austrian Cæsar was compelled to defer to the Grand Monarque; Spain, hopelessly degenerate, was expecting, on the death of its weak king, the calamity of a disputed succession; England was fretting under the corrupt government of the restored Stuarts. France, in one sentence, was supreme in Europe; no two powers were capable of combining against her; no single nation could venture to dispute the will of the French king.

If Louis were absolute abroad, he was still more absolute in his own dominions. The will of the king was the law of the land; and the people submitted, like sheep to a shepherd, to the orders of their ruler. It was enough for them that they participated in the glories which his arms had achieved, that they witnessed the grandeur with which he was surrounded. Secure under his strong arm, they were able to prosecute their own industries with success. They were, indeed, excluded from all share in the administration of the State, or even of the municipalities in which they resided, but the firm and intelligent government of the king and of his earlier ministers reconciled them to their own political annihilation.

Fifteen years before the close of the seventeenth century the peace of the monarchy was disturbed by an arbitrary act of the monarch. The Huguenots, who comprised the most industrious and most orderly of the French, enjoyed virtual liberty under the Edict of Nantes. The edict had been in force for nearly a century, when it was rudely revoked by the arbitrary act of Louis XIV. Hundreds of thousands of French men and women were compelled to choose between the sacrifice of their faith and the abandonment of their country, and

CHAP. I.

in an evil hour for France hundreds of thousands accepted the hard alternative and left her shores. France was deprived of the most independent and industrious of her population, and had no means of repairing the loss which bigotry had inflicted on her. The loss was the more serious because internal weakness was followed by external complications. The death of the King of Spain let loose once more the dogs of war on Europe, though the circumstances under which the new war broke out differed widely from those under which the last war had closed. England, no longer chafing under a corrupt government, had chosen for a sovereign the first diplomatist in Europe. Her armies, composed of troops of many nations, were under the command of the first soldier of his age. The policy of William survived his life; the genius of Marlborough defied the best efforts of the Grand Monarque and his generals. Louis had to consent to a ruinous peace. He had to contemplate a bankrupt exchequer. The situation was grave in the extreme. The autocracy of the king had been tolerated when his rule was successful; its permanence was threatened when success no longer followed his banners. It required men to save a government which had fallen into disrepute, and, unfortunately for the Bourbons, they depended in the hour of their need on women. Maintenon and Pompadour swayed the policy of Louis XIV. and Louis XV. The debauchery of the court, the corruption of the government, the extravagance of the administration, the accumulation of debt, the increase of taxation, all paved the way for the inevitable event. Autocracy stood firm till ruin overtook it, and then surrendered at discretion by summoning the States General.

The course which the Revolution took was horrible, but its excesses may more justly be attributed to the previous conduct of the court than to the ferocity of the people. The farther the arrow is drawn back the farther

it will fly, the harder the blow the stronger the rebound. The strength of reaction is measured by the force of the movement which it succeeds. For centuries the people of France had been regarded by the Government as so many cattle: they had been deprived of every privilege: they had borne exclusively the entire weight of the national taxation. They suddenly found themselves in possession of almost absolute power. They used it to accomplish many wise reforms, whose wisdom was forgotten amidst the extravagance and cruelty which unfortunately succeeded them. The force of the flood swept away the men who had raised the sluice gates. The mild despotism of the Bourbons was followed by the sanguinary despotism of the people. France lay weltering in its own blood, and the rest of Europe stood aghast at the spectacle. The inevitable reaction again came. The Terrorists succumbed before a new revolution. The nation, horrified at the use which its delegates had made of the power which had been entrusted to them, transferred the supreme authority to an oligarchy. The oligarchical Directory gave way, in its turn, to a Consulate; the Consulate to an Empire. France, after all her sacrifices, was still at the mercy of one man. She had exchanged a Log for a Stork—a Bourbon for a Napoleon.

The events, which had raised an artillery colonel to the throne of France, were partly attributable to the policy which the other nations of Europe pursued at the juncture. Austria and Prussia, Russia and Great Britain, had no concern with the internal affairs of France. But emperors and kings, who owed their thrones to what they were pleased to call the grace of God, were reluctant to admit that a monarch only reigned by the grace of his people. Austria and Prussia joined hands to march on Paris and restore a rightful king to his throne. In an evil hour for his country, Pitt joined the confederacy against France. The allies imagined that they had an easy

CHAP. I.

task before them, and that the French rustics would be unable to resist the onslaught of regular troops; but old-fashioned tactics were powerless before the new force to which France had given birth. The great revolutionary wave swept the armies of its opponents, as it had already swept the *émigrés*, from the soil of France. The confederacy of all Europe had had the effect of consolidating the power which it had been intended to subdue. Party spirit had yielded to the calls of patriotism: division had been replaced by union; and the very steps, which had been taken to replace the monarchy, had made the restoration of the monarchy impracticable.

From the hour at which the French peasants learned to stand at Valmy, the course of the Revolution was decided. Revolutionary excess found a vent in the passion for military aggrandisement, and France turned against her neighbours the arms which she had been employing against her own citizens. From that hour the neutrality of Europe became impossible. From being the attacked, France became the attacking party. From that hour, too, it became certain that France would sooner or later pass under the rule of a successful soldier, and she found in Napoleon one of the most successful soldiers that the world has ever seen. It would be useless to recapitulate here the brilliant achievements which the French accomplished under the guidance of their consul and their emperor. For fifteen years no nation seemed capable of withstanding his power, no general seemed able to cope with his daring genius. All Europe was overrun by the French armies; all Europe trembled at the nod of the French emperor. But the gigantic conquests of the conqueror prepared the way for his fall. The supplies from which he drew his armies were exhausted by the prodigal use which he made of them. A disastrous expedition, resulting in the total destruction of the Grand Army, hastened the collapse which would otherwise have ap-

proached more slowly. Europe rose from its despair as the ruins of Napoleon's hosts rolled back from Russia, and Leipsic and Waterloo stripped France of all her conquests, and deprived Napoleon of all his authority.

But, though France had been driven back into her old boundaries, though the legitimate king had been restored to the throne of his ancestors by the bayonets of foreign soldiers, something had been gained by the twenty-five years of alternate suffering and glory through which the nation had passed. The old court corruption, the old feudal privileges, the old oppressions, the corvées, the tithings, the quarterings of troops, had been swept away never to return. A Bourbon was again supreme, but his supremacy was very different from that of his ancestors. A parliament, elected by a popular suffrage, imposed some kind of control on the actions of his ministers, and the king by the grace of God and the help of foreign soldiery depended for the retention of his power on the favour of his people.

Austria.

If Austria had suffered less severely than France, she had won less glory. If the House of Hapsburg still retained its hereditary possessions, it had lost the rich Netherlands which had been ceded to it at Utrecht a century before; it had lost the proud position in central Europe which its representative occupied as Emperor of Germany. At the outbreak of the revolutionary war, three centuries had passed since the election of Maximilian of Austria to the imperial throne. At the close of the revolutionary war, nearly three centuries had passed since the election of Maximilian's grandson Charles to the same dignity had united the great powers of Germany and Spain, and had given the House of Hapsburg an absolute predominance in Europe. The imperial dignity was still enjoyed by one of Maximilian's direct descendants. But the fortunes of his family had been subjected in the interval to many vicissitudes. Ger-

CHAP. I.

many and Spain had again been separated on Charles' abdication, the emperor's brother Ferdinand succeeding to the empire, the emperor's son Philip inheriting the Spanish throne. The remoter causes which ultimately led to the decline and fall of Spain had their origin in events which happened before even Philip's birth. But his intolerable bigotry hastened a crisis which a more prudent man might possibly have averted, and might probably have postponed. The empire which had formed the most important portion of the possessions of Charles V. was reserved for a nobler history.

Ferdinand succeeded to all the hereditary possessions which his brother Charles had held in Germany. He acquired the kingdoms of Hungary and Bohemia by marriage. Enlarged by these acquisitions, Austria maintained its position in Europe for nearly two centuries. During this period it passed through a greater number of crises than any other State, but, hydra-headed, it rose stronger after every reverse. During the sixteenth century Austria was the barrier on which the waves of Mahometan invasion beat in vain. During the first half of the seventeenth century she was the champion of the Roman Catholic faith; during the next hundred years she was repeatedly opposed to the power of France; and in 1740 the accession of Maria Theresa to the throne threatened her with dismemberment. Austria was opposed to the boldest tactician of the age, and was exposed to the brunt of the great Frederick's attack. She was unable to prevent the consolidation of the Russian empire, or the permanent loss of one of her own provinces. But the Seven Years War had been as fatal to other countries, and Maria Theresa, on her death-bed, had the satisfaction of leaving her empire prosperous and peaceful.

Maria Theresa died in 1780. Two of her sons, Joseph and Leopold, successively succeeded to her domi-

nions; her daughter, Marie Antoinette, was married to Louis XVI. The misfortunes of his unhappy sister naturally induced Leopold to interfere in her favour, and notwithstanding the traditional jealousy, which separated the two countries, Prussia and Austria entered into an alliance against the revolution which had broken out in France. Leopold did not long survive the treaty which he had thus made. He had the good fortune to die before the misery of his sister was complete, or the disasters which were already threatening had overtaken his country. A long war, or rather a series of wars, weakened the power of the Austrian empire. The first of these wars was concluded in 1797 by the treaty of Campo Formio. Austria was compelled to cede Flanders, the left bank of the Rhine, and all her Italian provinces, to her victorious antagonist. She gained the doubtful advantage of acquiring the Venetian territory, which Napoleon permitted her to seize. In the second of these wars Austria made a gallant, and at first successful effort, to recover her lost territory. But Marengo in Italy, and Hohenlinden in the Black Forest, enabled the French to repeat at Luneville, in 1801, the conditions which they had imposed at Campo Formio in 1797. At the very outset of the third war Mack's surrender at Ulm opened the road to Vienna, and enabled Napoleon to enter the capital of Austria without even fighting a pitched battle. The victory of Austerlitz confirmed the impression which the fall of Vienna had already made. A peace was hastily drawn up at Presburg, by which Austria consented to fresh sacrifices. The confederation of the Rhine, partly formed out of the spoils of which she was stripped, formed a barrier between her and France; and the emperor, driven from his German dominions, was compelled to renounce the title which his family had enjoyed for centuries. The Emperor of Germany became Emperor of Austria.

CHAP. I.

Three disastrous wars, such as those which were concluded at Campo Formio, at Luneville, and at Presburg, would have destroyed the power of almost any State. Austria, however, had no sooner obtained the respite which she required, than she commenced preparations for renewing the struggle. War again broke out in 1809, and, though the French were again ultimately successful, the contest proved more equal than on any previous occasion. Vienna fell; but the fall of Vienna was the signal for the most memorable struggle which Europe had yet seen. The Austrians, under the guidance of the Archduke Charles, compelled Napoleon to retreat from the field of Aspern. The fearful struggle at Wagram increased the glory with which Aspern had already surrounded the arms of Austria. Austria for the fourth time was compelled to conclude peace with her conqueror. The treaty of Vienna imposed on her fresh sacrifices, but it restored the laurels which she had previously lost.

Within six months of the date on which the treaty of Vienna was signed, Napoleon obtained a divorce from the Empress Josephine, and married Maria Louisa, the daughter of the Emperor of Austria. The marriage enabled Austria to withdraw from the struggle in which she had suffered such serious reverses. For more than three years she remained at peace; but the three years during which she was at peace were big with the fate of the world. The standards of France were rolled back from the ruins of Moscow; the French troops were gradually forced to relax their hold on Spain, and to retreat across the Pyrenees. Napoleon, posted on the Elbe, still defied the united efforts of Russia, Prussia, and Sweden; and Austria, urged in one direction by the natural affection of its emperor for his daughter, impelled in the other by a traditional jealousy of French aggrandisement, hesitated to take part in the contest. For a few weeks Francis and Metternich seemed likely to be

the arbiters of Europe; for a few weeks the issue of the contest was apparently to be determined by diplomatists at Vienna. Had Napoleon been less confident in his genius or less extortionate in his demands, this result would unquestionably have occurred. But Napoleon, in the moment of his first reverse, preferred the chances of the sword to the tender consideration of his imperial father-in-law. Austria, deprived of the rôle which she had chosen, was compelled to throw her weight into the scale against him. The victory of Dresden seemed for the moment to justify Napoleon's decision, and Europe was again apparently prostrate before its unrelenting conqueror. But the reverse at Culm robbed the great victory of the consequences which might otherwise have ensued from it. A series of disasters drove the French from the Elbe to the Saale, from the Saale to the Rhine, from the Rhine to Paris. Napoleon, from a reluctance to cede any of his conquests, was deprived of everything, and the allied powers at Vienna and Paris divided among themselves the spoil of the contest. Austria gained largely from the pacification of 1815. She was confirmed in the possession of Venetia, she was rewarded by the acquisition of Lombardy, and she received in addition Illyria, Dalmatia, and other minor acquisitions. But the events of the war had deprived her of the Austrian Netherlands. She had lost the position in Western Europe which these provinces had afforded her, and she had become an eastern rather than a western power. Nor was her strength increased by the possession of Venetia and Lombardy, though these acquisitions extended her area and augmented her resources. The people of these provinces were hostile to her rule, and their hostility was pregnant with future disasters. The Emperor of Austria still remained the autocratic head of a huge and disorganised territory, a numerous and discontented people. The ability of his minister Metternich raised

CHAP. I.

him to the first rank among the autocrats of Europe. But the new conditions under which the world was to move were to place inert autocracies at a disadvantage. The Austrian eagle still spread its wings with its old confidence, but the wounds from which it was suffering reduced the range of its flight and limited its power.

Prussia.

The history of Prussia had been much shorter than that of Austria; but it had been much more glorious. At the outbreak of the Revolution in France only a century and a half had elapsed since the accession of Frederick William, the Great Elector, to the electorate of Brandenburg. Less than ninety years had passed since the Great Elector's son had become first King of Prussia. Less than thirty years had passed since the great Frederick had raised his country for the first time in her story to the front rank in Europe, and against overwhelming odds had brought the Seven Years War to an honourable and advantageous conclusion. The great king's son had been the first to throw down the gauntlet to revolutionary France; he had been one of the three royal participators in the plunder of Poland. He was himself spared the penalty which his country was to suffer for the crime. Prussia did not fall so rapidly as Austria before the arms of France. It was not until her army had been shattered at Jena in 1806 that her territories were dismembered and her power was destroyed. The degradation of Prussia was apparently complete, but the genius of one man saved her from annihilation. Napoleon imagined that he had placed an effectual restraint upon the people whom he had subdued by stipulating that their standing army should never exceed a certain strength. The Prussians, however, were driven by this very stipulation to organise the most formidable force which Europe had yet seen. Passing successive relays of the population through the ranks, they succeeded, in an incredibly short time, in training an entire people to the use of arms. Prussia was

thus enabled, when the French met with their first reverse, to rise in unprecedented strength, and to wreak a terrible vengeance upon her conqueror at Leipsic. She shared with Great Britain the crowning honour of the brief campaign which terminated at Waterloo.

Russia.

The huge empire which is now known as Russia, and which comprises nearly a seventh part of the land on the surface of the globe, has only gradually attained its enormous dimensions, and only recently acquired its preponderating influence in Europe. In ancient history Russia was only known as the remote and impenetrable territory from which hordes of barbarous tribes made their occasional inroads into Western Europe. In mediæval history Russia, under the dominion of the Tartars, was effectually separated from European politics by the intervening kingdom of Poland. It was only in the later half of the fourteenth century that Ivanovitch, the descendant of Ruric, succeeded in shaking off the Tartar yoke, and in establishing himself in partially independent rule at Moscow. The independence of the new State was, however, long doubtful. A hundred years after the death of Ivanovitch the Tartars returned in almost irresistible strength, and threatened its overthrow. Muscovy was not wholly emancipated from Tartar rule till after the accession of Ivan the Terrible. The horrible cruelties which disgraced the reign of this merciless tyrant have made his name execrable; but his able and determined rule emancipated his country from the Tartars and extended the limits of his empire. Ivan was the last sovereign but one of the House of Ruric. The race died out with Feodor at the close of the sixteenth century. The Russians in 1613 selected Mikhail, or Michael, as their new Czar. Mikhail was the head of the noble house of Romanoff, which thus acquired a position among the reigning families of Europe.

Mikhail was the grandfather of Peter I., or Peter the

CHAP. I.

Great, as he is usually called. Peter, who in the first instance had shared the throne with his brother Ivan, obtained sole possession of it in 1689. The empire of Russia dates from his accession. The capital during his reign was removed from Moscow to a new city—St. Petersburg, which the Emperor founded on the banks of the Neva. At the date of Peter's accession to the throne, his three most powerful neighbours were Sweden, Poland, and Turkey. Gustavus Adolphus had raised the first of these countries to a high position in Europe, and had made her the arbiter of the North. It was almost inevitable that she should come into collision with the new power which was gradually consolidating itself on her eastern flank. The temperament of Charles XII., who succeeded to the throne in 1697, hastened the conflict which under any circumstances would have occurred. For some years the Swedes taxed to the uttermost the disorganised resources of the Russian empire. Peter was totally defeated on the Narva, and his conqueror, marching into the heart of Russia, threatened to dictate the terms of peace at Moscow. Russia, however, in 1700 possessed the same inherent power of defence which she displayed more than a century afterwards. It was possible to defeat her armies, but it was impracticable to conquer her territory. Taught the lessons of war by contact with the Swedes, slowly gathering her almost endless resources together, the Russians, after a long humiliation, won the battle of Pultowa. From that time till the present day Russia has maintained an unquestioned predominance in Northern Europe.

Charles XII., defeated at Pultowa, fled to the mighty empire which marched with the southern boundaries of his conqueror's dominions. The Ottoman power was at that time already declining, but the Turks still retained the reputation which their victorious career had given them. Within thirty years of the date of Pultowa, the Crescent,

for a second time in history, had appeared before the walls of Vienna, and the timely aid of the Poles had alone relieved the capital of Austria from the humiliation of a Mussulman occupation. The Porte, which had already experienced the rising power of the new empire of the North, readily afforded Charles the refuge which he sought. Peter, after completing his conquest of the Swedes, turned his arms against the people among whom Charles had taken refuge. His expedition, however, resulted in a signal discomfiture. Hemmed in by an overwhelming force of Turks on the banks of the Pruth, Peter was compelled to accept a ruinous peace. Nothing but the dexterity of his consort Catherine, and the corruption of the Turks, saved the Russians from terms even more disastrous than those to which they were forced to accede.

The unceasing rivalry, which has since existed between Russia and Turkey, may be dated from the reign of Peter the Great. But the contest has since that time been conducted on conditions which pointed from the first to the ultimate victory of the Russians. The gradual decay of the Mahometan power made the Ottomans more and more feeble for the purposes of offensive warfare. The gradual organisation of the Russian empire rendered Russia a more and more formidable assailant. The process of decay on the one side, was, however, frequently retarded by the energy which individual Turks threw into the government of the Porte. The process of organisation, on the other, was often stopped by the wars or by the corruption of the Russian government. Russia, in fact, had other work in the eighteenth century to perform, besides the conquest of Turkey. Poland still existed as an independent kingdom on her western frontier; and Poland was ruthlessly partitioned among the neighbouring powers. By the acquisition of Warsaw, Russia thrust herself like a wedge into Europe, and for the first time acquired an

CHAP. I.

important influence. The events of the revolutionary war confirmed her authority. The conqueror who had subdued a continent recoiled from Russian territory. Friedland and the Borodino showed conclusively the worth of Russian soldiers. The burning of Moscow proved to the astonished victor that reverses which would have broken any other European power had no effect on the Russian empire. Russia rose from her temporary prostration to march in triumph upon Paris, and a Russian army occupied the splendid capital of the French empire.

Russia had not had the sole merit of producing the fall of Napoleon; but the Czar of Russia had much greater influence in the councils which succeeded the war than either the Emperor of Austria or the King of Prussia. Francis of Austria owed his influence in congress to the ability of Metternich. Alexander of Russia derived his authority from the force of his own character. There was much in his disposition which was calculated to excite the regard and admiration of his contemporaries. He was sincerely desirous of peace, and he firmly believed that the memorable events, in which he had played so distinguished a part, were capable of affording the blessings of a long peace to the exhausted Continent. Madame Krudener persuaded him to originate an alliance with Austria and Prussia for this purpose. Justice, christian charity, and peace were to be the guiding motives of the three potentates in future. The reign of peace which was thus inaugurated, was, however, emphatically a peace for sovereigns and not for their people. The peace, at which Alexander aimed, involved the implicit obedience of every nation to the orders of those who happened to be their rulers. It wholly ignored the novel doctrine that the people themselves had a right to influence the actions of their governors. Such a doctrine seemed utterly incomprehensible to the mighty autocrat who was absolute ruler over all the Russians. The victors who had re-

stored the map of Western Europe to its original shape, seemed to him to have little or nothing to do with the feelings of the populace beneath them.

Minor States.

So far as the five great continental countries were concerned, twenty years of constant warfare had made comparatively small changes. The old boundaries of France had been restored; and, though Austria had lost the Netherlands, she had retained most of the remainder of her old territory. But in other respects the map of Europe had been materially modified. The victors in the moment of their triumph had imitated the conduct to which they themselves had been exposed on their defeat; and Russia, Austria, and Prussia, had contended for considerable additions to their territory in return for the sacrifices which they had made. Great Britain alone required no continental kingdom, and stood opposed to the desire of her allies for aggrandisement. Her influence, however, could not instil moderation into their hearts. Russia permanently extended her sway beyond the Vistula. The Belgians, though Roman Catholic in faith, were compelled to allow their provinces to be annexed to the Protestant kingdom of Holland. Prussia repaid herself for her exertions by seizing upon a portion of the kingdom of Saxony. Austria obtained compensation for the loss of the Netherlands in the romantic city which is seated on the waves of the Adriatic. Tuscany and Modena, Italian in their sympathies and in their connections, were handed over to the dominion of Austrian archdukes; and Genoa, which had attained her prosperity under republican institutions, was annexed against her will to the kingdom of Piedmont. The power of the conquerors was so great, the prostration of France was so complete, that the minor nations of Europe had no alternative but submission to these arrangements. A few men, sitting in congress, absolutely disposed of the fate of millions of Europeans. People, in the view of an Alexander, or a Frederic, or a

CHAP. I.

Francis, were only born to be governed, and autocratic princes, ruling by the will of heaven, were entitled to dispose of them as they chose. The sentiment was in strict accordance with the principles on which the French revolutionary war had been originally undertaken. It was totally opposed to the ideas on which the Revolution had been founded, and which even the triumphs of the allies had not extirpated from men's minds. A few statesmen were already in existence who questioned both the prudence and the propriety of disposing of whole peoples like flocks of sheep, and of settling governments and nations against the will of the nationality. A few wise men predicted that the settlement of 1815 contained in it the seeds of future trouble; that the time would come when the rapacious would regret their rapacity, and the weak would rise against the strong. Predictions of this kind carried no weight at the time. Europe, sickened of war, would have submitted to any settlement. Countries, which had been the constant scene of hostilities, imagined that any fate was preferable to a new appeal to arms, and the settlement of 1815 was tolerated, not because it was just, but because the world was weary of bloodshedding, and too exhausted to dispute the will of the conquerors.[1]

Great Britain

Great Britain had not participated in the spoils which the allied powers had extorted from France. Though she had borne the chief burthen of the contest, though the struggle had been sustained by her resources, alone among the allies she forbore to claim any return for the enormous sacrifices which the war had entailed on her. Yet the effect of the struggle had been to raise this

[1] 'I mentioned,' wrote Romilly of his speech on the peace, 'that among other articles carried from Paris, under pretence of restoring them to their rightful owners, were the Corinthian horses which had been brought from Venice; but how strange an act of justice was this, to give them back their statues, but not to restore to them those far more valuable possessions, their territory and their republic, which were at the same time wrested from the Venetians.'—*Romilly*, iii. 226.

country to the very highest place among European nations. It had repaired for ever the losses which she had sustained in the earlier years of the reign of George III. No sovereign had ever inherited a nobler dominion than that to which George III. succeeded on the death of his grandfather in 1760. The dangers, which the glorious Revolution of 1688 had created, were rapidly passing away; the fortunate change in a dynasty and a constitution were producing the happiest results. Constitutional government had superseded the arbitrary rule of the degenerate Stuarts, and a free people, strong in their freedom, were extending their empire, their trade, and their influence. Marlborough, in the days of Anne, had raised his country to the first place in Europe. Walpole, in the days of George I. and George II., by his incomparable skill as a financier, and by the prudence of his government, had largely promoted her prosperity. Chatham, during the Seven Years War, had conducted a campaign against overwhelming odds to a glorious conclusion; while Clive in one hemisphere, and Wolfe in another, had conquered empires for the crown of England. Scotland, contented with the union, was submitting herself quietly to the House of Hanover; England, revelling in her new prosperity, was loyally attached to the dynasty which had conferred on her so many material advantages; and even Ireland, with a surplus revenue to dispose of, only required fair treatment and a firm government. The Pretender was in Rome; the last expedition of Prince Charlie had terminated in disaster; and no descendant of the Stuarts virtually contested the right of the new dynasty. England, in one sentence, was happy at home and respected abroad. CHAP. I.

The new king was, unfortunately, a very young man; he was imbued with singular views of personal government, and he had not yet acquired the experience which, later in his life, would undoubtedly have induced him to

CHAP. I.

place himself in the hands of his constitutional advisers. Mr. Froude has lately published a singular letter which the young king, in the earlier years of his reign, addressed to his representative in Ireland.[1] The communication undoubtedly forms a remarkable State paper. It is full of admirable advice; it evidently proves that the king understood the Irish difficulty at least as well as some of his counsellors. It deserves, as a State paper, the commendation which the historian bestows upon it. But though, if it had been the production of a minister, it would receive almost unqualified admiration, it is very doubtful whether it merits any admiration at all as the work of a king. Constitutional monarchs have other things to do than to compose remarkable State papers. They are certainly precluded by their position from composing papers on State policy which are to be kept secret from their own advisers. Even at the close of his long reign George III. had hardly grasped the truth that he was precluded, under any circumstances, from acting independently of his counsellors. At the beginning of his reign he had every intention of asserting his own opinions on all occasions. His ministers were to be ministers in the strict sense of the term, and not his advisers. The experiment broke down deplorably. The untried Scotch peer who was chosen to supersede one of the greatest ministers who ever governed England, had to give way to George Grenville. The folly of George Grenville in passing the Stamp Act, and the madness of a later minister in carrying a similar measure, led to the memorable revolt of the American colonies, and to the loss of the American empire. George III.'s unhappy attempt at arbitrary rule, and unfortunate preference for weak ministers, had inflicted an incalculable injury on the noble inheritance to which he had succeeded, and had contributed to the dismemberment of the British empire.

[1] *The English in Ireland*, vol. ii. p. 140.

The first five-and-twenty years of George III.'s reign form, then, an unfortunate era in the history of Great Britain. But, before the five-and-twenty years were quite concluded, a new statesman, cast in a different mould from either Bute or Grenville, had unexpectedly risen on the political horizon. William Pitt had inherited from his father the great qualities which had enrolled Lord Chatham's name amongst the chief worthies of England. A feeble body had not interfered with the growth of a vigorous mind, and the beardless young man, only twenty-three years of age, proved himself at the very outset of his career a match for the most formidable of his opponents. A financier at a time when many men are still reading for their degree, prime minister of England at an age when most barristers are still studying for their profession, Pitt undoubtedly owed much to his father's reputation, but he owed more to his own abilities, and the confidence which he had in them. There is nothing more remarkable in history than the spectacle of the youthful minister standing up night after night to battle with an Opposition, confident in its numbers and formidable for its parliamentary ability. There is nothing more memorable in history than the victory which he gained over his adversaries, and the use which he made of the power secured for him by his triumph. Pitt, as a minister, had two difficulties to contend with. He had to deal with the unconstitutional claims of a sovereign to whom he was personally indebted; he had to reform the abuses of a government which was founded on a system of exclusion, and which drew its chief revenue from duties whose very existence hampered the trade and fettered the industry of the nation.

It is to Pitt's immortal honour that he should have remedied one of these evils, and that he should have attempted to deal with the other of them. George III. found in Pitt an adviser, not a minister, and, though on

CHAP. I.

one memorable occasion, conscientious scruples unfortunately induced the monarch to adhere to his own principles, the obstinacy which obtained for Protestantism a few years more of superiority deprived the throne of the services of the man who was really most capable of upholding it. It is even more creditable to Pitt that he should have promoted a large scheme of parliamentary reform, and that he should have honestly attempted to relieve the trade of the kingdom from the fetters which shackled it. The revolutionary wave which swept over Europe, whose influence was even perceptible on these shores, drove him indeed from his admirable purpose into an opposite policy; but the man who blames Pitt for his later conduct should in justice remember the liberal spirit which pervaded his earlier administration.

It is easy to see now that neither Europe generally, nor this country in particular, had any reason to interfere in the lamentable scenes which deluged France with blood in the closing decade of the eighteenth century. We had not interfered with the monstrous abuses which had disfigured the government of the Bourbons; we had no concern with the monstrous excesses which discredited the cause of popular liberty. The horrible scenes which were acted in Paris, the flight of the king, his capture, his judicial murder, ought to have excited the indignation of Europe; they ought not to have demanded its interposition. Unhappily, however, in the eighteenth century the cause of monarchy was identified with the cause of order, and other European nations witnessed the degradation of a king in France with much the same feelings with which the Americans would contemplate the creation of a king in Canada. The cause of monarchy was supposed to be universally attacked by the destruction of monarchy in France, and the great sovereigns of Europe interfered, not so much to restore Louis XVI. as to prevent their own dethronement. If, however, the sovereigns

of Europe should have refrained from intervention, it is evident that, if they intervened at all, they should at least have done so effectually. The road to Paris was open, the French people were broken up into parties; they had no army, no money, and no credit. A really determined general, at the head of a really well organised expedition, must have succeeded in forcing his way to Paris and in restoring order. Unhappily the allies were jealous of each other, and uncertain what to do. Their generals, instead of marching, manœuvred; they indulged in purposeless cannonades, and abstained from direct attacks. Their imbecility and vacillation served a double purpose. Their own troops were dispirited, their enemies were educated. The revolutionary wave which was deluging France with blood found an outlet in military ambition.

The fearful war which was thus wantonly commenced continued with short intervals for fourteen years. During the course of it every power but one deserted in turn the cause which had been undertaken in common; every power but one suffered the penalty of a French invasion. England alone, with one short interval of peace, persevered from the commencement to the close of the struggle. England alone was saved from the humiliation of invasion. Yet Englishmen can look back at the earlier events of the war with only slight satisfaction. The brilliant victories at sea, which made this country the first naval power in the world, barely atoned for the discreditable part which she played on land. The most important expedition which she attempted ended in a mere military parade. The largest subsidies which she lavished on her allies did not save them from defeat or deter them from deserting her.

During the whole of Pitt's short life—though not solely from Pitt's fault—this state of things continued. When he died, Trafalgar had made his country absolute mistress of the seas. Austerlitz had made Napoleon the

CHAP. I.

master of the Continent. Jena, Friedland, Wagram, Tilsit, and Vienna confirmed the supremacy which the French emperor had thus acquired; and, at the commencement of 1809, Napoleon could almost boast that he had no more enemies to subdue. It would be useless, in these prefatory remarks, to refer to the well-known circumstances which ultimately led to the prostration of the French empire. The monstrous determination of Buonaparte to seat his own brother on the throne of Spain; the fortunate decision of the Portland ministry to support the waning cause of Europe in the Peninsula; the happy selection of the great Duke of Wellington as the commander of the British troops; the steady perseverance of successive British ministers, the ability of the commander, the bravery of the army, the outbreak of the Russian war, the retreat of the French from the Kremlin and the simultaneous bursting by the British of the southern barrier of France—these are all events with which every child is familiar, and which it cannot be necessary to detail. Waterloo fixed a stamp to the supremacy which England had acquired, and the British empire rose from the struggle the first power in the world.

Description.

The country, which had thus acquired the first place in the world, comprises a group of islands situated on the north-western flank of continental Europe. The two largest of these islands are popularly known as Great Britain and Ireland, and contain respectively an area of about 89,000 and 32,000 square miles. Great Britain, the larger of the two, is divided into three parts, England, Scotland, and Wales; of these, Wales is chiefly peopled by the descendants of the original Keltic inhabitants of Britain, who retreated into the Welsh fastnesses before a succession of invaders. Scotland is mainly inhabited by the descendants of the Kelts and Gaels, who maintained in the rudest ages an impregnable position in their

mountain highlands. Kelt and Roman, Saxon and Dane, Norseman and Norman, have mingled their blood and speech, and produced by their union the English race and the English language. Before the commencement of the present century nothing was known exactly about the population of the three kingdoms. Macaulay, indeed, infers from comparatively reliable data that the entire population of England and Wales in the closing decade of the seventeenth century did not exceed 5,500,000, or fall short of 5,000,000 persons.[1] Respectable authorities may, however, be cited to prove that Macaulay has rather under-estimated than exaggerated the number,[2] and 5,500,000 persons is the very lowest estimate which can be fairly made of the inhabitants of England and Wales in 1690. One hundred and eleven years afterwards, or in 1801, the same country only contained 8,873,000 persons. More than a century of progress had only added some 3,000,000 to the number of its people. Ten years later on, or in 1811, the number had increased to 10,150,000; while in 1816 it probably amounted (taking the mean between the populations of 1811 and 1821) to upwards of 11,000,000. Notwithstanding the war which this country had been conducting, the increase of its population in only fifteen years had been two-thirds as great as that which had taken place during the previous century.

Population.

Scotland, in one sense, had been a much more backward country than England. In the middle of the eighteenth century, English roads were intolerably bad;

[1] Mr. Rickman calculated the number at 6,045,008 in 1700. See Preface to *Census Returns* of 1841, pp. 36, 37, and note to Porter's *Progress of the Nation*, p. 13. This estimate is probably much more accurate than Macaulay's.

[2] The reader who is curious on this point will find some interesting information upon it in Somers' *Tracts*, where (vol. x. p. 596) Houghton estimates the number of inhabited houses at 1,175,951. Davenant placed the number of houses in 1690 at 1,391,215. See Anderson's *Hist. of Commerce*, vol. ii. p. 594. Cf. also *Apology for the Builder*, published in Lord Overstone's collection of Tracts.

CHAP. I.

but Scotland, it might almost have been said, had no roads. English agriculture was backward; but Scotland was uncultivated. English industry was unimportant; but Scotland had neither industries nor trade. A journey from London to Edinburgh was a more difficult and a more hazardous undertaking than a journey from London to New York is now; and the traveller, like Johnson or Wordsworth, who attempted a tour in the Highlands, was forced to ride, and to submit to more inconveniences than a tourist would meet with now in the wildest parts of Europe. Yet the development of Scotland was proceeding at least as rapidly as that of England and Wales. The events of 1745 taught the Government the necessity of military roads; and roads formed for military purposes materially promoted the prosperity of the kingdom. In the latter half of the eighteenth century, Scotland made unexpected progress. Her lowlands were gradually converted from a barren waste into the garden of Great Britain. The Clyde, improved by Scotch enterprise, shared the trade of the Mersey; the manufactories of Dundee robbed Belfast of its supremacy in linen; and Edinburgh, deprived of the pomp which is usually associated with a capital, increased with a rapidity which, in former days, it had never known. In 1801 Scotland was found to contain 1,599,000 persons. The population rose in 1811 to 1,805,000; and exceeded in 1821 2,093,000. It may fairly be computed to have consisted in 1816 of 1,950,000 persons.

No census was taken in Ireland till the year 1813. Nothing, therefore, is known exactly of the increase of the population of that unhappy country before that time. Ireland is said to have contained only 2,372,634 persons in 1754; Lord Colchester, who was chief secretary for Ireland in 1802, says that the population at that time was estimated by one leading Irishman at 3,000,000, and

by another at 4,000,000.[1] The census of 1813 was in many respects incomplete. The numbers were never made up for Louth, Westmeath, Wexford, Cavan, Donegal, and Sligo. There are fair grounds, however, for believing that the population at that time was not less than 5,400,000, and did not exceed 5,600,000. The number of the people in 1821 was found to have increased to 6,801,000; and it is, probably, therefore not very inaccurate to conclude that the population of Ireland in 1816 amounted to about 6,000,000 souls.

At the conclusion of the great war, then, England and Wales had a population of about 11,000,000; Ireland of about 6,000,000; Scotland of about 1,950,000 persons. The entire population of the United Kingdom (including the smaller islands) must have exceeded 19,000,000. At the commencement of the war, England and Wales had not, probably, more than 8,500,000; Scotland had not more than 1,500,000; and Ireland had not more than 4,000,000 inhabitants. At the very highest estimate, therefore, the United Kingdom had commenced the struggle with only 14,000,000 of persons. At the very lowest estimate she retired from it with 19,000,000. The growth of the people, which had taken place in the interval, was the more remarkable when it was compared with that of our great rival. France had entered the revolutionary war with a population of 26,363,000. In 1817, when she had again been reduced to her 'ancient limits, the population returns gave a total of 29,217,465.'[2] The United Kingdom, in the interval, had added 5,000,000 souls to its 14,000,000 inhabitants. France, on the contrary, had added only 1,500,000 to every 14,000,000 of her people. The disparity between the rival nations was being rapidly

[1] Haydn's *Dict. of Dates*, sub verb. Population. *Colchester*, vol. i. p. 273.
[2] Porter's *Progress of the Nation*, p. 18.

CHAP. I.

removed; and the argument, on which Napoleon mainly relied, that his own superior numbers must ultimately assure him a victory, was becoming continually weaker. It was constantly becoming evident that the day would arrive when the great rivals would contend on equal terms.

The National Debt.

Fourteen millions of people, increasing in a quarter of a century to nineteen millions, had in less than a generation raised their country to the first place in the world. But the victory had been won at a tremendous cost. In the year 1792, the last complete year of peace, the debt of Great Britain had amounted to 237,400,000*l.*; the debt of Ireland to about 2,250,000*l.* The entire debt of the United Kingdom only slightly exceeded 239,650,000*l.* In 1815, the last year of the war, the capital of the debt of Great Britain amounted to about 834,260,000*l.*; the capital of the Irish debt exceeded 26,770,000*l.* The entire debt of the United Kingdom reached 861,000,000*l.*[1] The debt in 1792 imposed a charge of 9,301,000*l.* on Great Britain, and of 131,000*l.* on Ireland. The charge of the debt in 1815 had risen (without the sinking fund) to 32,645,618*l.* The gigantic debt, which had thus been rapidly accumulated, was of very recent origin. The earlier kings of England had, indeed, like their later successors, frequent occasions for more money than their revenues afforded them. But the art of borrowing was in its infancy; the best security was bad. Money-lenders refused to advance their money on bad security, except at high rates of interest; and high rates of interest were illegal by the laws of man, and reprobated (so churchmen taught) by the laws of God. When one of the earlier kings of the country required money, he anticipated his revenue if he were an

[1] See the important return, Session 1858, No. 443, pp. 78, 79. Porter gives the total at 885,000,000*l.*, *Progress of the Nation*, p. 482; but he apparently includes in this sum the proximate value of the annuities which were never at that time officially calculated.

honest man; or he raised a forced loan from the Jews if he were a dishonest one. The creditor, in return for his loan, received a tally; and the loan was said to be borrowed on the security of the tally. It is probable that a good many people now are ignorant of the meaning of a word which a few centuries ago was in common use among their ancestors.

'Score' (which is the past participle of the old Saxon verb shear, and which is the same word as shore) 'when used for the number twenty, has been well and rationally accounted for by supposing that our unlearned ancestors, to avoid the embarrassment of large numbers, when they had made twice ten notches cut off the piece or tally (taglié) containing them, and afterwards counted the scores or pieces cut off, and reckoned by the number of separated pieces or by scores. This ancient manner of reckoning is humorously noted by Shakespeare: "Thou hast most traitorously corrupted the youth of the realm in erecting a grammar school; and whereas before our grandfathers had no other books but the *score* and the *tally*, thou hast caused printing to be used."'[1] Tallies were still in use in Ireland at the commencement of the present century. 'It's a tally, plase your honour,' says the Widow O'Neill, in the 'Absentee.' 'Oh, you're a foreigner: it's the way the labourers do keep the account of the day's work with the overseer, the bailiff; a notch for every day the bailiff makes on his stick, and the labourer the like on his stick, to tally: and when we come to make up the account it's by the notches we go.'[2] The tally, then, was originally a rough piece of wood which our ancestors cut or notched to assist them to count. Just as the five-pound note exceeds in finish and perfection of workmanship the ordinary piece of paper on which this

[1] Horne Tooke, *Diversions of Purley*, part ii. Of Abstraction, p. 427.

[2] *Tales of Fashionable Life*, vol. vi. p. 175. A representation of a tally will be found in *Parl. Papers*, 366, part ii. Sess. 1869, p. 339.

CHAP. I.

sentence is printed, so the tally of loan surpassed the rude tally of the innkeeper or the tradesman. But just as the five-pound note is, after all, nothing but a bit of paper, so the tally of loan was nothing but a bit of wood.[1] This rude system of borrowing money continued in force till a very recent period. Up to the reign of Henry VI. money was borrowed by the sovereign on his own security. In the reign of Henry VI., Parliament authorised the crown, on four separate occasions, to raise money by loan, and took the burden of the debt upon its own shoulders. Two more centuries elapsed before the legislature, in the reign of Charles II., formally authorised the crown to issue public negotiable securities bearing 6 per cent. interest. This issue marked the commencement of the modern National Debt of England. But it was attended with very unfortunate consequences. Within eight years, Charles, on the advice of Clifford, closed the exchequer. The unfortunate creditors received for a few years the interest of their debt, though this payment was at last suspended; and, after carrying a suit against the crown from the inferior courts to the Chancellor, and from the Chancellor to the House of Lords, the creditors of the State were compelled to forego their entire claim to interest, and accept as a full discharge one half of their original debt, or 664,263*l.* This 664,263*l.* is the oldest portion of the National Debt.

The Revolution of 1688 succeeded. The hereditary revenues of the crown were obviously insufficient for the

[1] A flat piece of well-seasoned wood was selected. 'The sum of money which it bore was cut in notches by the cutter of the tallies, and likewise written upon two sides of it by the writer of the tallies. The tally was cleft in the middle by the deputy-chamberlain with a knife and a mallet through the shaft and the notches, whereby it made two halves, each half having a superscription and a half part of the notch or notches. It being thus divided or cleft, one part was called a tally, the other a counter-tally; and when these two parts came afterwards to be joined, if they were genuine they fitted so exactly that they appeared evidently to be parts the one of the other.'—Madox, *Hist. of Exchequer*, fol. ed., p. 709, and Return, Sess. 1858, p. 443.

heavy expenditure in which the Government was unavoidably involved; and Parliament, in granting liberal supplies, wisely insisted on the proper appropriation and audit of the money which they voted. Charles Montagu, subsequently Lord Halifax, who was chancellor of the exchequer at this period, is generally known as one of the poets whom Johnson has honoured with a life; but Charles Montagu's poetical genius bore no comparison with his financial knowledge. With the aid of Newton he reformed the currency. For the sake of replenishing the treasury he introduced exchequer bills; and by his admirable qualities he conducted the financial affairs of the country with success in a period of unprecedented and perhaps unexampled difficulty. Charles Montagu deserves to be remembered as the first of the four great financiers whom this country has produced. But Charles Montagu's invention of exchequer bills was not the only innovation in the art of borrowing for which the reign of William and Mary is remarkable. It was in this reign that the first general mortgage, as it was called, was raised. It was in this reign that life annuities, tontine annuities, and annuities for terms of years, were first thought of. It was in this reign that the Bank of England was incorporated, and that the first loan was obtained from the Bank. It was in this reign that the new East India Company was constituted, and that another loan was obtained for the State as the price of their constitution. Parliament had exchanged its own security for that of the king, and had raised by so doing the credit of the nation.

At the commencement of the reign of William III., the country was practically free from debt. At the close of it, a debt of 12,500,000*l.* imposed a charge of more than 1,200,000*l.* a year on the nation. The war of the Spanish Succession added to the burden. The debt at the peace of Utrecht reached nearly 35,000,000*l.*; the

CHAP. I.

charge upon it exceeded 3,000,000*l.* a year. When Sir Robert Walpole commenced his memorable administration in 1721, the capital of the debt stood at 54,400,000*l.*; the interest at 2,855,000*l.* When he was driven from office in 1742 the capital was less than 51,850,000; the interest was less than 2,160,000*l.* These figures were never destined to be reduced. The war of the Austrian Succession raised the capital to 75,800,000*l.*; the interest to 3,165,000*l.* The Seven Years War raised the capital to 132,000,000*l.*; the interest to 5,000,000*l.* The American War increased the capital to 232,000,000*l.*; the interest to 9,000,000*l.*; and at the outset of the French revolutionary war the capital had risen to 240,000,000*l.*; the interest to 9,430,000*l.*[1] The gloomiest anticipations had been freely formed at each successive addition to the amount of the debt. 'The vast load of debt under which the nation still groans,' wrote the 'Craftsman' in 1736, when the debt was under 50,000,000*l.*, 'is the source of all those calamities and gloomy prospects of which we have so much reason to complain. To this has been owing that multiplicity of burthensome taxes which have more than doubled the price of the common necessaries of life within a few years past, and thereby distressed the poor labourer and manufacturer, disabled the farmer to pay his rent, and put even gentlemen of plentiful estates under the greatest difficulties to make a proper provision for their families.' 'Our parliamentary aids,' wrote the great Lord Bolingbroke in 1749, 'from the year 1740 exclusively to the year 1748 inclusively, amount to 55,522,157*l.* 16*s.* 3*d.*, a sum that will appear incredible to future generations, and is so almost to the present. Till we have paid a good part of our debt, and restored our country in some measure to her former wealth and power, it will be difficult to maintain the dignity of Great Britain, to make her respected abroad, and secure from

[1] Return, National Debt, Session 1858, No. 443.

injuries or even affronts on the part of our neighbours.' 'It has been a generally received notion among political arithmeticians,' wrote Mr. Hannay in 1756, 'that we may increase our debt to 100,000,000*l.*, but they acknowledge that it must then cease by the debtor becoming bankrupt.' 'The ruinous effects of it (the debt),' wrote Hume in 1778, 'are now become apparent, and threaten the very existence of the nation.'[1]

The anticipations, which were thus freely hazarded of the consequences which would result from the vast debt under which the country was labouring, were signally falsified. The debt grew: but the wealth of the country grew much more rapidly. In 1806 the country raised by taxation a larger sum than that which Bolingbroke had declared would appear incredible to future generations as an eight years' yield. But even this sum was soon surpassed. In 1815 the country raised more than 74,000,000*l.* by taxation alone. The expenditure of the twenty-four years ending January 5, 1816, exceeded 1,500,000,000*l.*, or averaged more than sixty millions a year, and no less than 1,280,000,000*l.* (832,000,000*l.* of which were, however, applied to the reduction of debt) were borrowed in the same period.[2] This statement, however, suggestive as it is, only imperfectly indicates the real growth of the debt during the great revolutionary war. Most of the money was raised at 3 per cent.: and, as the funds were frequently as low as 50, the stock created usually largely exceeded the money received by the Government. The capital of the debt rose by much more than the difference between the amount of money borrowed and the amount applied to the liquidation of old liabilities. The total capital of the debt amounted in 1815 to 861,000,000*l.*, the charge upon it, excluding the sinking fund, to 32,645,000*l.*[3]

[1] See all these quotations in Porter's *Progress of the Nation*, p. 482.

[2] Ibid. p. 489.

[3] Return, National Debt, Sess. 1858, No. 443.

CHAP. I.

The Sinking Fund.

The interest on the National Debt, however, did not include the whole charge thrown by it on the taxpayer. The country, while it was steadily increasing its liabilities, was pleasing itself with the delusion that it was rapidly extinguishing them. A certain addition was voluntarily made to the interest of the debt raised, and the sum so added to it was annually invested in stock, which was set religiously apart as a sinking fund. The interest of the stock so purchased was permitted to swell this fund, which became in consequence larger and of greater importance in every succeeding year. The plan was commended to the generation, which approved it, by the support which it had received from Pitt. Pitt's immediate successors did not venture to disregard a device introduced on his high authority, and the sinking fund was accordingly maintained with the utmost confidence in its merits. Had the ordinary income of the year been sufficient to cover all the charges thrown upon it, the sinking fund might have proved as advantageous as its supporters anticipated. But, throughout the whole of the war, the revenue at the disposal of the Government was insufficient for the expenditure of the country. Large sums of money were necessarily borrowed, and the determination to preserve the sinking fund inviolate only made the nation borrow more largely than would otherwise have been necessary. Many millions were annually raised by loans, and applied to the redemption of the debt. The country borrowed money from one set of creditors and paid it to another, and gained nothing by the process save a sop to its vanity.

The vanity of the public was indeed flattered beyond measure by the expedient. The sinking fund, which was in reality reducing no more debt than its existence compelled the ministry to create, seemed on paper to be as powerful as its originators had intended it to be. At the close of the war it amounted to more than 14,000,000*l.* annually: and it seemed mathematically demonstrable that

a sinking fund of 14,000,000*l.*, accruing at compound interest, would pay off the entire debt in less than half a century. Unfortunately, however, all these calculations depended on the assumption that the revenue at the disposal of the Government would be sufficient to defray the whole cost of the public service, of the charge on the debt, and of the sinking fund itself. Unfortunately, too, every addition to the cost of government, every reduction of taxation, every decrease of revenue, were liable to falsify them. The scheme, in fact, depended on the surplus income of the country being equal to the whole amount of the sinking fund, and, as the result proved, it rarely exceeded one tenth of it. The plan, in a heavily taxed country, with constituencies clamouring for fiscal relief, was certain to fail. It required its failure to prove that the only way of reducing debt is to apply an unexpended surplus to its redemption.

Revenue.

The war then had burdened the country with a formidable debt, and had, of course, necessitated a resort to heavy taxation. In 1792, when the United Kingdom was still at peace, the entire expenditure of the nation had not reached 20,000,000*l.*[1] During the three last years of the great war the expenditure had averaged upwards of 100,000,000*l.* a year. In 1816 the interest and sinking fund of the debt alone absorbed more than 46,000,000*l.* Though then the restoration of peace made reductions of expenditure possible, it was clear to all parties that heavy taxation would still be necessary. The people had been taxed severely during the preceding twenty-four years to support the war. But the burdens, which the war had occasioned, were to necessitate taxation almost equally severe being levied upon their descendants.

There is, perhaps, nothing more marvellous in the history of the world than the growth of the revenue of

[1] Porter's *Progress of the Nation*, p. 480.

CHAP. I.

the United Kingdom. A little more than one hundred years before the French Revolution commenced, the United Kingdom could hardly be said to have had a revenue. The king, indeed, enjoyed an enormous property. As lord paramount, he was entitled to various lucrative and inconvenient feudal incidents; and the forfeiture of estates, either for treason or felony, was perpetually tending to increase the income at his disposal. With ordinary prudence and care the kings of England might easily have carried on the government of the country without asking for additional assistance from their subjects. Happily, however, for the future of this country, the kings of England did not possess ordinary prudence, or exercise ordinary care. They squandered their vast estates on their ministers or their favourites, and were compelled in consequence to apply to Parliament for assistance to enable them to conduct the government. Had they been less extravagant, they might have dispensed with a legislature: the Petition of Right, in that case, might never have been drawn up; the Grand Remonstrance might never have been framed; and England even now might not have gained the full blessings of a free and constitutional monarchy. England in this way may be said to owe more to her bad kings than her good ones. The good monarchs reconciled their subjects to arbitrary rule, the bad ones induced them to establish their liberties.

It required, however, a long series of lessons before the people of England learned that the only guarantee for the constitutional rule of a sovereign lay in the retention of the power of the purse by the people: and that, so long as the revenues were granted absolutely to a king, the king would be free to govern in his own way. The worst evils of the old financial system were reproduced on the restoration of Charles II., and some of them were, in fact, intensified by the Parliament of the day. A

Parliament of landlords was naturally anxious to relieve the land of the country from the burden of feudal incidents, and Charles II. offered to abandon the emoluments of signiory for 100,000*l.* a year. The feudal incidents had constituted a landlord's burden, and justice therefore required that the compensating impost should be raised by a direct tax on land. Unfortunately, however, the Parliament had before it the example of an excise. The excise had originally been introduced in Holland, where no article was either too insignificant or too costly to escape the impost of the exciseman. Half seriously, half in jest, it was stated that in that country the dish of fish and its sauce had paid the duty thirty times before it was sent up to the table. It was certain that a tax, so universal in its application and so productive in its results, would be ultimately extended to other countries, and both royalists and parliamentarians had, as a matter of fact, recourse to it during the Civil War. Both parties, indeed, were loud in their declarations that the tax should be terminated at the close of the war. All unpopular taxes, when first proposed, are usually granted under a similar promise. The promise, when the nation is accustomed to the burden, is forgotten: the usefulness of the tax alone is remembered. So was it with the excise. At the Restoration the landlords desired to escape from some disagreeable burdens. The king was ready to relieve them if he were only compensated. Justice required that the compensation should be found in a tax on land. Interest suggested the expediency of shifting the burden on to the consumer. By a very narrow majority of only two votes the latter alternative was preferred, and a moiety of the excise was settled on the crown. The bargain, however unjust to the people, proved profitable to the king. The moiety of the excise increased rapidly in value, till, at the close of Charles II.'s reign, it yielded three times the sum for which the

The Excise.

CHAP. I.

king had originally offered to surrender his claim to the feudal incidents.

The Customs.

In the days of the Stuarts the excise formed the most important branch of the king's revenue. The customs duties were, however, far more ancient, and hardly less profitable. Some authorities have derived the name from the antiquity of the tax—the 'custom' or use, which formally gave it to the king.[1] Customs, under the name of prisage and butlerage, were paid to the kings of England after the Conquest. Prisage was the right of purchasing, at the moderate price of 20*s.* a tun, one tenth of the wine imported in English vessels into England. Butlerage was a duty of 2*s.* a tun on every tun of wine, to which foreign importers, in consideration of their exemption from prisage, were liable. Both these duties dated from the reign of Richard I. The customs, to use the word in its larger and usual sense, were of later origin. The *custuma antiqua et magna* comprised the export duties on the three staple commodities of the kingdom, wool, skins, and leather. The *custuma parva et nova*, or tunnage and poundage, as they were commonly called, duties on every tun of wine imported or every pound of merchandise exported, were originally imposed on aliens only, though they were subsequently exacted also from British citizens. The lesser customs could only be levied with the consent of Parliament; the greater customs were the inherent right of the crown. When Edward I. promised to take no customs from merchants without the consent of the realm, he added the significant words, 'saving to us and our heirs the customs on wool, skins, and leather, formerly granted to us by the commonalty aforesaid.' But after the Restoration, when the rates of the great customs had been increased, the whole of the customs duties were placed on a common footing,

[1] The derivation is so given in Johnson's *Dict.*; the old Norman French *coustume* being the immediate root of the word.

and were all of them included in the permanent Revenue of the crown.

The customs were farmed by John for 1,000 marks, or 2,000*l.* a year. In the reign of his successor they amounted to 6,000*l.* But the amount was said to be injurious to trade. In 1590 Elizabeth raised the farm, which was then held by Sir Thomas Smith, from 14,000*l.*[1] to 50,000*l.* a year. But the yield of the duties rose rapidly afterwards. On James I.'s accession it amounted to 127,000*l.*; and, at the close of his reign, it had reached 190,000*l.*[2] It is stated, though probably incorrectly, that, at the outbreak of the Civil War, it had been increased to 500,000*l.* It was estimated at the period of the Revolution at 577,000*l.* a year. At the time of the Revolution the entire revenue of the State only slightly exceeded 1,600,000*l.* a year. The customs and the excise together contributed very nearly 1,200,000*l.* of this amount. The only other branches of importance were the hearth money and the Post Office. The former produced 200,000*l.*; the latter about 55,000*l.* a year.[3] Hearth money was a very ancient tax, but a very unpopular one. It is mentioned in Domesday Book under the name of fumage or fuage, and consequently must have existed before the Conquest. It had, however, long fallen into disuse, when it was revived after the restoration of Charles II. It was a tax of 2*s.* on each hearth on all houses paying to church and poor; and was of course very burdensome to the poorer householders. It was

Other Branches of the Revenue.

[1] The amount is given by Philips as 13,000*l.*, and by Camden as 14,000*l.* Naunton simply says that the amount was doubled; and Sinclair, from whom these references are taken, conceives that the 14,000*l.* of Camden is a mistake in the translation, and that 24,000*l.* ought to have been written. Vide *Hist. of Revenue*, 3rd ed. vol. i. p. 207, note.

[2] *Hist. of Revenue*, vol. i. pp. 100, 104, 235, 324, 326. McCulloch, ad verb. Customs. McCulloch on *Taxation*, p. 227. Hume's *Hist. of England*, vol. v. p. 474.

[3] These figures are taken from *Commons Journals*, 1688, pp. 37, 38. They are given differently in the return of 1869, where the temporary and expired revenue is included.

CHAP. I.

abolished, at William III.'s own instance, immediately after the Revolution.[1]

The Revenue not settled in 1689.

Such is a brief review of the revenue of this country at the period at which it may first be said to have had a revenue. Almost the first act of the Convention Parliament, after the Revolution of 1688, was to consider whether the revenue had devolved on William and Mary. No one, as Macaulay has pointed out, doubted that the lands and hereditaments of the crown had passed with the crown to the new sovereigns.[2] But the income, derivable from the lands and hereditaments of the crown, was inconsiderable in comparison with that which was drawn from the customs and excise. William himself was pardonably anxious to obtain uncontrolled possession of the whole of this revenue. Holt, who almost immediately afterwards was made chief justice of the King's Bench; Pollexfen, who, after serving for a few weeks as attorney-general, was made chief justice of the Court of Common Pleas; Treby, who succeeded Pollexfen as attorney-general—all took the king's side. 'They maintained that the revenue was subjected to the same regulations as private property; that, having been granted to James for the purposes of government during his life, it could not be alienated from that purpose, or follow him after he had deserted his public trust; but that, while he lived, it belonged to the person substituted in his official state.'[3] Fortunately for the country, a greater man than any of these three saw through the legal technicalities in which they were assiduously wrapping up the subject. Somers, who had already become 'the life, the soul, the spirit' of the Whig party, argued—for there seems to be no doubt that Macaulay and Campbell have supplied a correct interpretation of the purport of a speech which has come

[1] Sinclair's *Hist. of Revenue*, p. 41.

[2] Macaulay's Works, vol. ii. p. 133.

[3] Somerville, *Political Transactions*, pp. 267, 268. Campbell's *Lives of Chief Justices*, vol. ii. p. 133.

down to us in the shortest and most compressed of summaries—that the word 'life,' in the Act by which the revenue had been settled, must in this instance be interpreted as synonymous with 'reign'; that it was absurd to maintain that the revenue was to be exacted because James 'was naturally alive,' but that it was to be paid to his successors 'because he was politically defunct.' The House, convinced by Somers' arguments, adopted his position as their own. They decided, without dividing, that 'the revenue had expired.' But they did not proceed, as William probably anticipated, and certainly hoped that they would, to resettle the revenue. 'A long and painful experience' had convinced them that all the evils, which the country had had to endure during the last two reigns, had arisen from the imprudent haste with which the Commons had settled a revenue on the crown, and which had enabled the king to dispense with the aid of a Parliament. The Whigs, on their part, were determined that this opportunity should never be placed in the hands of another sovereign. And at the risk of incurring the king's displeasure, with the possibility of provoking his abdication, they persisted in their determination. That determination constitutes by far the most important event in the financial history of this country. It probably did even more than either Magna Charta or the Declaration of Rights, to secure the liberties of the English nation.

In the 160 years which succeeded this debate, four men of first-rate financial genius at different periods administered the finances of the kingdom. It was the object of Charles Montagu, Lord Halifax, to establish the tottering credit of the nation; to organise the debt; to reform the currency; and to insure an audit. It was the object of Sir Robert Walpole to develope the trade of the kingdom, and to free it from every hindrance; while, at the same time, the pressure of taxation was concealed from the taxpayer. With these views he developed the

CHAP. I.

excise, and devised the warehousing system. It was the object of William Pitt—till his intentions were frustrated by war—to obtain financial concessions from foreign Governments in return for concessions of our own. With this view he negotiated the famous commercial treaty with France. It was the object of Sir Robert Peel to free trade from every possible shackle, and to raise the money required for the purposes of the State in the simplest and most direct manner. The reform of the tariff, the repeal of the corn-laws, and the revival of the income-tax, were the salient features of this policy. Sir Robert Walpole's financial policy may be said to have been founded on free trade and indirect taxation. Pitt's upon reciprocity and indirect taxation. Sir Robert Peel's on free trade and direct taxation.

The subsequent growth of the Revenue.

During the same period, the revenue, which the nation in 1690 took into its own custody, had increased with marvellous and unexpected rapidity. At the date of the Revolution, the revenue, including the hearth money, amounted to only 1,600,000*l.* At the close of the reign of William III. the national income, without the hearth money, exceeded 4,869,000*l.*[1] In the interval, indeed, a tax of 4*s.* in the pound had been laid upon all lands, tenements, and other hereditaments, and on the profits of some offices; while a poll-tax, graduated according to the station of the taxpayer, and various other duties, had also been imposed. But the revenue had not merely increased from the addition of fresh duties. The old branches had concurrently been developed. The advantages of settled government, and of an improved trade, were promoting the prosperity of the kingdom; and the customs and the excise, in the place of only 577,000*l.* and 610,000*l.*, were yielding substantial revenues of 1,469,000*l.* and 1,396,000*l.* Notwithstanding the repeal of the poll-tax, the revenue still continued to be maintained, and, in

[1] Parl. Return, Sess. 1869, No. 566, part i. p. 26.

the years immediately preceding 1706, it regularly exceeded 5,200,000*l.* a year.[1]

The union with Scotland, which was agreed to in 1706, did not add materially to the financial resources of the kingdom. Scotland was a barren country, with little agriculture and little trade, and its gross income hardly exceeded 100,000*l.* a year. Scotland, by the terms of the union, was subjected to the same customs and excise duties as England; it agreed to raise 48,000*l.* of land tax for every 1,997,000*l.* raised in England. England, on her part, agreed that certain stamp duties and other taxes should not be extended to Scotland.[2] The union did not add $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. to the national revenues, but the resources still continued to grow. The net income of the country amounted in 1720 to 6,323,000*l.* The eighteen succeeding years of Sir Robert Walpole's administration, during which the country uniformly enjoyed the blessings of peace, were, in a financial sense, the most prosperous which had ever been known. Walpole found the net income of the country 6,323,000*l.*; the expenditure 6,002,000*l.*, of which nearly one half, or 2,768,000*l.*, was absorbed by the debt. In 1738, before he had been driven by the violence of party into the Spanish war, the net income of the country had been reduced to less than 5,716,000*l.*, the expenditure to 4,724,000*l.*, and the charge of the debt to 2,059,000*l.* Even when the Spanish war broke out, the revenue was not raised, during Walpole's administration, to more than 6,415,000*l.*; the charge of the debt never exceeded 2,100,000*l.* The entire expenditure of the nation never reached 7,400,000*l.*[3]

While Walpole continued in office, the cost of the

[1] See the Parl. Return already quoted, part i. pp. 32–34. The *gross* revenues which are given in the Appendix, part ii. p. 357, averaged nearly 5,800,000*l.* The balances are deducted from all these amounts.

[2] Ibid. part ii. pp. 356, 357.

[3] Ibid. part i. pp. 430, 431.

CHAP. I.

Spanish war was partly defrayed by fresh taxation. The land tax, which, at the commencement of the war, stood at only 2*s.*, was raised at once to the maximum of 4*s.* in the pound. But, after Walpole was driven from office, no material additions were made to the revenue. The war was sustained on borrowed money, and fresh sums were annually added to the amount and the burden of the debt. The revenue, after the conclusion of the war, amounted to less than 7,500,000*l.*, the expenditure of the country exceeded 7,000,000*l.*, and the debt alone absorbed about 3,000,000*l.* annually. Unfortunately, the country only remained at peace for a brief interval of eight years. War again broke out in 1756. The Seven Years War, concluded in 1763, may be said to have permanently raised the income of the country to 10,000,000*l.*, the expenditure to 9,500,000*l.*, and the charge of the debt to about 4,750,000*l.* After another short interval of peace, the American War ensued. The national income and expenditure were raised in consequence to more than 16,000,000*l.*, the charge of the debt to more than 9,000,000*l.* During the twenty years of Sir Robert Walpole's rule, the expenditure had only been raised by about 1,400,000*l.*; the charge of the debt had been reduced by more than 650,000*l.* The forty years which succeeded his fall had added 9,000,000*l.* to the normal expenditure of the country, and 7,000,000*l.* to the annual burden of the debt.

No material alteration in the financial position of the country was made during the succeeding ten years. The country continued at peace, and enjoyed the advantages derivable from peace. Its entire expenditure during 1791–2 (the last complete year of peace), amounted to rather less than 17,000,000*l.*; and considerably more than one half of this sum, or 9,310,000*l.*, represented the charge of the National Debt. The income of the country was in the main derived from four great branches. The

excise, the most productive of the four, produced 8,740,000*l.*; the customs yielded 4,100,000*l.*; various stamps returned 1,460,000*l.*, and the land and assessed taxes supplied a revenue of 3,020,000*l.* The country, therefore, from these great branches of the revenue alone, had an ample revenue of 17,300,000*l.* The war ensued. Prodigious and unprecedented exertions necessitated prodigious and unprecedented expenditure. Taxation was increased; the debt was augmented with a rapidity which would have startled previous generations. The expenditure of Great Britain in 1801 amounted to 51,000,000*l.* The charge of the debt alone absorbed 16,750,000*l.*, and more than 31,500,000*l.* were raised by taxation. The nation was becoming gradually reconciled to burdens which would have been deemed intolerable only a few years before.

Irish Revenue.

The union of Great Britain and Ireland in 1801 increased these figures, though it did not increase the resources at the disposal of the State. The revenue of Ireland amounted in 1800 to rather more than 3,000,000*l.* a year. The expenditure of the Irish Government, however, exceeded 6,500,000*l.*, and in consequence the Irish Government had been, of late years, dependent on the assistance of the British exchequer. A million and a half had been remitted to it in 1798, 2,000,000*l.* in 1799, and 3,000,000*l.* in 1800. The union did not produce an immediate fusion of the British and Irish exchequers. The two countries were permitted to retain separate financial systems, and to raise their respective revenues in their own way. It was arranged that each country should bear the burden of its own debt, and that Great Britain should contribute fifteen parts and Ireland two parts of the sum required for the joint expenditure of the United Kingdom. Parliament, however, was to be free, under any circumstances, to alter these proportions after the lapse of twenty years, and if, in the interval, the

CHAP. I.

debts of the two countries ever stood to each other in the proportion of their respective expenditures, it was to be at liberty to complete the union forthwith by the amalgamation of the exchequers and the indiscriminate taxation of each nation. Such were the leading financial provisions of the union. In the fourteen years which succeeded it the expenditure of both countries rose with frightful rapidity. The expenditure of Great Britain increased from 51,000,000*l.* in 1800 to 91,000,000*l.* in 1815. The expenditure of Ireland rose from 6,500,000*l.* in 1800 to nearly 15,000,000*l.* in 1815. The gross produce of taxation in Great Britain increased from 31,500,000*l.* in 1800 to 78,600,000*l.* in 1815. The gross produce of taxation in Ireland increased in the same period from 3,000,000*l.* to 6,600,000*l.* The charge of the English debt rose from 16,750,000*l.* to 28,426,000*l.*, the charge of the Irish debt from 1,000,000*l.* to 3,850,000*l.* The period had already arrived which had been foreseen in the union. The Irish debt constituted more than two seventeenths of the entire liabilities of the United Kingdom.

Currency.

The greatest exertions had necessarily been made to meet the enormous charges which the war had occasioned. The customs duties had been increased; the stamp duties had been increased; additions had been made to the excise; and a new tax of ten per cent. on income had been instituted. These additions to the taxation of the State had materially augmented the resources at the disposal of the Government, but they had, at the same time, proved exceptionally burdensome to the taxpayer. The country groaned under imposts, to which nothing but the continuance of the war would have reconciled it, and longed for peace as the season at which some alleviation from the burdens of the war could only be anticipated. Additional taxation, however, was not the only burden which the war had occasioned. The

income-tax swept one tenth part of every man's income into the coffers of the State, but another measure, of much more consequence than the income-tax, reduced almost indefinitely the purchasing value of the residue. If a man enjoyed an income of 1,000*l.* a year, he knew that he was bound to contribute 100*l.* to the State, though the 1,000*l.* was, in itself, a totally different thing to the 1,000*l.* which he had enjoyed when the war commenced. The purchasing value of each pound was less than it had been formerly, because the pound represented no longer a piece of solid gold of known, recognised, and comparatively immutable value, but a piece of paper, issued on the credit of the Bank of England, inconvertible into gold, and varying in value with every ebb and flow in the tide of war, every storm that threatened a bad harvest, or every sunny day that promised a good one.

The Bank of England.

The Bank of England, the most important establishment not merely in England but in the world, owes its foundation to the ingenuity of a Mr. William Paterson, and to the serious want of William III.'s Government for money. Paterson lent the Government 1,200,000*l.*, and, in return for the loan, obtained a charter incorporating the Governor and Society of the Bank of England. The charter was renewed on various occasions. The debt of the Government to the Bank was simultaneously increased, and at the commencement of the revolutionary war the capital of the Bank amounted to 11,642,000*l.*, while the debt due to it by the Government amounted to 11,686,000*l.* In the meanwhile the Bank had received some privileges, and had passed through many vicissitudes. In 1708 Parliament restrained every other body, consisting of six or a greater number of persons, from borrowing, owing, or taking up any sum or sums of money on their bills or notes payable on demand, or in any less time than six months from the borrowing thereof. The Act effectually prevented the competition of any

CHAP. I.

company enjoying more than six partners. If, however, the Bank of England enjoyed great privileges, it was occasionally exposed to serious difficulties In 1696, while Montagu and Newton were busily engaged with the reform of the coin, the Bank of England was compelled to suspend payment of its notes! In 1745, while the Pretender was advancing on London, the Bank, in order to gain time, was obliged to pay in shillings and sixpences! In 1793 a severe run on many private banks occasioned a prolonged drain for bullion on the Bank of England; and in 1797, the demand for specie abroad, the fear of invasion, the failure of many provincial banks, and the panic which in consequence prevailed, compelled the Government to prohibit the directors of the Bank from paying their notes in cash, and induced Parliament to continue the restriction till six months after the signature of a definitive treaty of peace.[1]

The suspension of cash payments, which was thus sanctioned in 1797, and which was continued for more than twenty years, constituted one of the most important events in the financial history of England. One school of writers has regarded it as the source of the prosperity which England subsequently enjoyed: another school has reprobated it with every degree of violence. The immediate results of the suspension of cash payments were not, however, striking. The Bank of England did not find it necessary to increase its issues very materially. The credit of the Bank was unshaken; and the public readily consented to take its paper, and to regard it of at least equal value with gold. For some years before the suspension of cash payments, the circulation of banknotes had rarely been less than 10,000,000*l.*, and had on at least one occasion exceeded 14,000,000*l.* During the three succeeding years, the issue of bank paper was not increased; and the paper in consequence still continued

[1] McCulloch, ad verb. Bank of England, for this section of the work.

to maintain its value. A very large issue of notes was made for the first time in 1800. Nearly 17,000,000*l.* were in circulation, and the paper of the Bank fell to a discount of 8 per cent. Peace, however, ensued; the Bank slightly contracted its issues; its notes recovered their former value, and the subject escaped attention. The renewal of the war in 1803 necessitated increased issues by the Bank. The circulation steadily increased, and the value of the paper simultaneously declined. In 1810, when the famous Bullion Committee was appointed, some 25,000,000*l.* of paper was in circulation, and every 100*l.* of paper was only worth 86*l.* 10*s.* in gold.

The depreciation of the bank paper affected different people in very different ways. A hundred pounds of paper being only worth 86*l.* 10*s.*, would obviously only purchase as much as 86*l.* 10*s.* in gold would have procured. As a matter of fact it seems to be admitted that the purchasing value of the paper fell rather more rapidly than its value compared with gold. The price of gold rose more than the price of all other commodities. The merchant, it is thought, concluded that, when paper had already fallen in value, it might fall still further; and in taking it, therefore, for the commodity in which he dealt, discounted the possibility of its further depreciation. Whether this be so or no, it is certain that the rise in the value of other articles (corn for example) was far more marked than the fall in the value of bank paper. The landed classes experienced no inconvenience from this state of things. Corn having risen in value in a greater ratio than paper had fallen, a greater number of persons were tempted to grow corn. All these persons required land. An increased competition arose accordingly for farms, and the rent of land rose, and rose largely. The full effects of this change on the landed interest will be seen in a subsequent chapter. It is sufficient at this point to

CHAP. I.

observe that the landowners, as a class, not merely did not lose, but gained largely from the effects of the paper currency. If, indeed, as was frequently the case, the country gentleman's estate was mortgaged, the gain was even more marked. The interest on his mortgage was paid in a depreciated currency; but the effect of the depreciation in the currency was to raise his rent. His creditors suffered while he gained from the change. The gain which the landowner enjoyed was shared in a lesser degree by the manufacturing and the trading classes. They paid the foreigner more for the goods, which they bought of him, but they charged their customers much more for the commodities which they sold to them. Like the landowners, they experienced no inconvenience from the depreciation in the currency. But the comparatively few people, who lived on fixed incomes, and the great mass of the nation, who were dependent on daily labour, were in a very different position. The wages of labour did not rise with the fall in the value of the currency, and therefore every labourer was worse off than before the war. The annuitant with a thousand a year had to pay 100*l.* in income-tax, and his remaining 900*l.* was practically only worth 750*l.* The labourer with nine shillings a week had his wages, to all intents and purposes, reduced to seven shillings and sixpence.

The landowners and the manufacturers, however, paid comparatively little attention to the sufferings of annuitants or day labourers. Rents had never been so high, profits had never been so large, as during the continuance of the war. The manufacturing industries of the country had never previously experienced so marvellous a development. The hum of the workshop was heard in places which had previously only been disturbed by the whirr of the grouse; and new forces, undreamed of a century before, were employed to assist the progress of production. The trade of the United Kingdom acquired

an importance which it had never previously enjoyed, and the manufacturing classes obtained an influence which they had never before known. The landowners were slowly losing the monopoly of power which they had enjoyed for centuries. Traders and manufacturers were daily obtaining fresh wealth and influence. A new England was supplanting the old country: and agriculture, the sole business of our forefathers, was gradually becoming of less importance than trade. In 1793, the first year of the war, the official value of all the imports into Britain was less than 20,000,000*l.* In 1815, the year of Waterloo, it exceeded 31,000,000*l.* In 1792, the official value of British and Irish exports was only 18,000,000*l.*; it rose in 1815 to 41,000,000*l.* The official values, however, give only a very imperfect idea of the extent of our export trade. They are based on prices fixed so far back as 1696, and afford, therefore, an inaccurate test of the extent of our trade. No attempt was made to ascertain the declared or real value of the exports till the year 1798, when it slightly exceeded 33,000,000*l.* The declared value of the exports of British and Irish produce in 1815 exceeded 49,000,000*l.* The rise in the value of the exports and imports was attributable to many causes. The predominance of the British at sea had driven every enemy from the ocean, and had enabled British merchants to ply their trade in comparative safety. The numerous possessions, which the British had acquired in every quarter of the globe, had provided them with customers in all parts of the world; and the most civilised, as well as the most savage, of nations were purchasing the produce of the looms of Manchester and of the factories of Birmingham. Even the taxation which the war had necessitated had stimulated the manufacturers to fresh exertions. The merchants were continually discovering fresh outlets for British

Trade.

CHAP. II.

trade; the manufacturers were constantly encouraged to increase their produce.[1]

The Woollen Trade.

Wool was the most ancient and most important of English manufactures. Custom seemed to point to the permanent superiority of the woollen trade. The Chancellor of England sat on a sack of wool; and when men spoke of the staple trade, they always referred to the trade in wool. For centuries, British sovereigns and British statesmen had, after their own fashion, and according to their own ideas, actively promoted this particular industry. Edward III. had induced Flemish weavers to settle in this country. The Restoration Parliament had prohibited the exportation of British wool, and had ordered that the very dead should be interred in woollen shrouds. The manufacturers spread over the entire kingdom. Wherever there was a running stream to turn their mill, there was at any rate the possibility of a woollen factory. Norwich, with its contiguous village of Worsted, was the chief seat of the trade. But York and Bradford, Worcestershire and Gloucestershire, Manchester and Kendal, were largely dependent on it.

The steps, which Parliament took to promote this particular industry, were not always very wise; in one point they were not very just. Ireland, in many respects, could have competed on advantageous terms with the woollen manufacturers of England. English jealousy prohibited in consequence the importation of Irish manufactured woollen goods. The result hardly answered the sanguine anticipations of the selfish senators who had secured it. The Irish, instead of sending their fleeces to be worked up in Great Britain, smuggled them, in return for contraband spirits, to France. England failed to obtain any large addition to her raw material; and Ireland

[1] McCulloch's *Commercial Dictionary*, imports and exports; cf., however, Porter's *Progress of the Nation*, p. 357, where the figures are slightly different. Nothing is more difficult than to ascertain the correct figures.

was driven into closer communication with the hereditary foe of England. The loss of the Irish fleeces was the more serious from another cause. The home supply of wool had originally been abundant and good; but its production, at the commencement of the century, was not increasing as rapidly as the demand for it; the quality of home-grown wool was rapidly deteriorating. The same sheep do not produce both wool and mutton in the greatest perfection. Every improvement in their meat is effected at the cost of their fleece. English mutton was better than it had ever been; but English manufacturers were compelled to mix foreign with native wool. Had trade been free this result would have been of little moment. The English could have easily obtained an ample supply of raw material from the hills of Spain and other countries. But, at the very time at which foreign wool became indispensable, the necessities of the country, or the ignorance of her financiers, led to the imposition of a heavy import duty on wool. Addington, in 1802, levied a duty upon it of 5*s.* 3*d.* the cwt.; Vansittart, in 1813, raised the tax to 6*s.* 8*d.* The folly of the protectionists had done much to ruin the wool trade. But the evil already done was small in comparison with that in store.

Notwithstanding, however, the restrictions on the wool trade, the woollen industry was of great importance. In 1800, Law, as counsel to the manufacturers, declared, in an address to the House of Lords, that 600,000 packs of wool, worth 6,600,000*l.* were produced annually in England and Wales, and that 1,500,000 persons were employed in the manufacture. But these figures, as McCulloch[1] has shown, are undoubtedly great exaggerations. Rather more than 400,000 packs of wool were available for manufacturing purposes at the commencement of the century; more than nine-tenths of these were produced at home; and some 350,000 or 400,000 persons

CHAP. I.

were probably employed in the trade.[1] The great woollen industry still deserved the name of our staple trade; but it did not merit the exaggerated description which persons, who should have known better, applied to it.

Cotton.

If the staple trade of the country had originally been in woollen goods at the commencement of the present century, cotton was rapidly gaining upon wool. Cotton had been used in the extreme East and in the extreme West from the earliest periods of which we have any record. The Spaniards, on their discovery of America, found the Mexicans clothed in cotton. 'There are trees,' Herodotus had written, nearly 2,000 years before, 'which grow wild there (in India), the fruit whereof is a wool exceeding in beauty and goodness that of sheep. The natives make their clothes of this tree wool.'[2] But though the use of cotton had been known from the earliest ages, both in India and America, no cotton goods were imported into Europe; and in the ancient world both rich and poor were clothed in silk, linen, and wool. The industrious Moors introduced cotton into Spain. Many centuries afterwards cotton was imported into Italy, Saxony, and the Low Countries. Isolated from the rest of Europe, with little wealth, little industry, and no roads; rent by civil commotions; the English were the last people in Europe to introduce the manufacture of cotton goods into their own homes.

Towards the close of the sixteenth century, indeed, cotton goods were occasionally mentioned in the Statute Book, and the manufacture of the cottons of Manchester was regulated by Acts passed in the reigns of Henry VIII., Edward VI., and Elizabeth. But there seem to be good reasons for concluding that Manchester cottons, in

[1] *McCulloch*, ad verb. Wool. Porter's *Progress of the Nation*, pp. 170–175.

[2] Rawlinson's *Herodotus*, vol. ii. p. 411. The German name for cotton is Baumwolle—tree wool.

the time of the Tudors, were woollen goods, and did not consist of cotton at all. More than a century elapsed before any considerable trade in cotton attracted the attention of the legislature. The woollen manufacturers complained that people were dressing their children in printed cottons; and Parliament was actually persuaded to prohibit the introduction of Indian printed calicoes. Even an Act of Parliament, however, was unable to extinguish the growing taste for Indian cottons. The ladies, according to the complaint of an old writer, expected 'to do what they please, to say what they please, and wear what they please.' The taste for cotton led to the introduction of calico-printing in London; Parliament, in order to encourage the new trade, was induced to sanction the importation of plain cotton cloths from India under a duty. The demand, which was thus created for calicoes, probably promoted their manufacture at home; and Manchester, Bolton, Frome, and other places, gradually acquired fresh vitality from the creation of a new industry.

Many years, however, passed before the trade attained anything but the slenderest proportions. In the year 1697 only 1,976,359 lbs. of cotton wool were imported into the United Kingdom. In the year 1751 only 2,976,610 lbs. were imported. The official value of cotton goods exported amounted in the former year to only 5,915*l.*; in the latter year to only 45,986*l.* At the present time Britain annually purchases about 1,500,000,000 lbs. of cotton wool. She annually disposes of cotton goods worth 60,000,000*l.* The import trade is 500 times as large as it was in 1751; the value of the exports has been increased 1,300 fold. The world has never seen, in any similar period, so prodigious a growth of manufacturing industry. But the trade has not merely grown from an infant into a giant; its conditions have been concurrently revolutionised. Up to

CHAP. I.

the middle of the last century, cotton goods were really never made at all. The so-called cotton manufactures were a combination of wool or linen and cotton. No Englishman had been able to produce a cotton thread strong enough for the warp; and even the cotton manufacturers themselves appear to have despaired of doing so. They induced Parliament in 1736 to repeal the prohibition, which still encumbered the Statute Book, against wearing printed calicoes; but the repeal was granted on the curious condition 'that the warp thereof be entirely linen yarn.' Parliament no doubt intended by this condition to check the importation of Indian goods without interfering with the home manufacturers. The superior skill of the Indian manufacturers enabled them to use cotton for a warp; while clumsy workmanship made the use of cotton as a warp unattainable at home.

In the middle of the eighteenth century, then, a piece of cotton cloth, in the true sense of the term, had never been made in England. The so-called cotton goods were all made in the cottages of the weavers. The yarn was carded by hand; it was spun by hand; it was worked into cloth by a hand-loom. The weaver was usually the head of the family; his wife and unmarried daughters spun the yarn for him. Spinning was the ordinary occupation of every girl, and the distaff was, for countless centuries, the ordinary occupation of every woman. The occupation was so universal that the distaff was occasionally used as a synonym for woman. 'Le royaume de France ne tombe point en *quenouille*.'

> See my royal master murdered,
> His crown usurped, a *distaff* in the throne.

To this day every unmarried girl is commonly described as a 'spinster.'

The operation of weaving was, however, much more rapid than that of spinning. The weaver consumed more

weft than his own family could supply him with; and the weavers generally experienced the greatest difficulty in obtaining sufficient yarn. About the middle of the eighteenth century the ingenuity of two persons, a father and a son, made this difference more apparent. The shuttle had originally been thrown by the hand from one end of the loom to the other. John Kay, a native of Bury, by his invention of the fly-shuttle, saved the weaver from this labour. The lathe, in which the shuttle runs, was lengthened at both ends; two strings were attached to its opposite ends; the strings were held by a peg in the weaver's hands, and, by plucking the peg, the weaver was enabled to give the necessary impulse to the shuttle. Robert Kay, John Kay's son, added the drop-box, by means of which the weaver was able 'to use any one of three shuttles, each containing a different coloured weft, without the trouble of taking them from and replacing them in the lathe.' By means of these inventions the productive power of each weaver was doubled. Each weaver was easily able to perform the amount of work which had previously required two men to do; and the spinsters found themselves more hopelessly distanced than ever in their efforts to supply the weavers with weft.

The preparation of weft was entirely accomplished by manual labour, and the process was very complicated. Carding and roving were both slowly performed with the aid of the clumsy implements which had originally been invented for the purpose. 'Carding is the process to which the cotton is subjected after it has been opened and cleaned, in order that the fibres of the wool may be disentangled, straightened, and laid parallel with each other, so as to admit of being spun. This was formerly effected by instruments called hand-cards, which were brushes made of short pieces of wire instead of bristles, the wires being stuck into a sheet of leather, at a certain angle, and the leather fastened on a flat piece of wood

CHAP. I.

about twelve inches long and five wide, with a handle. The cotton being spread upon one of the cards, it was repeatedly combed with another till all the fibres were laid straight, when it was stripped off the card in a fleecy roll ready for the rover. In "roving" the spinner took the short fleecy rolls in which the cotton was stripped off the hand-cards, applied them successively to the spindle, and whilst with one hand she turned the wheel and thus made the spindle revolve, with the other she drew out the cardings, which, receiving a slight twist from the spindle, were made into thick threads called rovings, and wound upon the spindle so as to form cops.' In spinning, 'the roving was spun into yarn; the operation was similar, but the thread was drawn out much finer and received much more twist. It will be seen that this instrument only admitted of one thread being spun at a time by one pair of hands, and the slowness of the operation and consequent expensiveness of the yarn formed a great obstacle to the establishment of a new manufacture.'

The trade was in this humble and primitive state when a series of extraordinary and unparalleled inventions revolutionised the conditions on which cotton had been hitherto prepared. A little more than a century ago John Hargreaves, a poor weaver in the neighbourhood of Blackburn, was returning home from a long walk, in which he had been purchasing a further supply of yarn for his loom. As he entered his cottage, his wife Jenny accidentally upset the spindle which she was using. Hargreaves noticed that the spindles, which were now thrown into an upright position, continued to revolve, and that the thread was still spinning in his wife's hand. The idea immediately occurred to him that it would be possible to connect a considerable number of upright spindles with one wheel, and thus multiply the productive power of each spinster. 'He contrived a frame in one part of which he placed eight rovings in a row, and in another

part a row of eight spindles. The rovings, when extended to the spindles passed between two horizontal bars of wood, forming a clasp which opened and shut somewhat like a parallel ruler. When pressed together this clasp held the threads fast; a certain portion of roving being extended from the spindles to the wooden clasp, the clasp was closed, and was then drawn along the horizontal frame to a considerable distance from the spindles, by which the threads were lengthened out and reduced to the proper tenuity; this was done with the spinner's left hand, and his right hand at the same time turned a wheel which caused the spindles to revolve rapidly, and thus the roving was spun into yarn. By returning the clasp to its first situation and letting down a piercer wire, the yarn was wound upon the spindle.'

Hargreaves succeeded in keeping his admirable invention secret for a time; but the powers of his machine soon became known. His ignorant neighbours hastily concluded that a machine, which enabled one spinster to do the work of eight, would throw multitudes of persons out of employment. A mob broke into his house and destroyed his machine. Hargreaves himself had to retire to Nottingham, where, with the friendly assistance of another person, he was able to take out a patent for the spinning-jenny, as the machine, in compliment to his industrious wife, was called.

The invention of the spinning-jenny gave a new impulse to the cotton manufacture. But the invention of the spinning-jenny, if it had been accompanied by no other improvements, would not have allowed any purely cotton goods to be manufactured in England. The yarn spun by the jenny, like that which had previously been spun by hand, was neither fine enough nor hard enough to be employed as warp, and linen or woollen threads had consequently to be used for this purpose. In the very year, however, in which Hargreaves moved from

CHAP. I.

Blackburn to Nottingham, Richard Arkwright took out a patent for his still more celebrated machine. It is alleged that John Wyatt of Birmingham, thirty years before the date of Arkwright's patent, had elaborated a machine for spinning by rollers. But in a work of this description it is impossible to analyse the conflicting claims of rival inventors to the credit of discovering particular machinery; and the historian can do no more than record the struggles of those whose names are associated with the improvements which he is noticing. Richard Arkwright, like John Hargreaves, had a humble origin. Hargreaves began life as a poor weaver, Arkwright as a barber's assistant. Hargreaves had a fitting partner in his industrious wife Jenny. Mrs. Arkwright is said to have destroyed the models which her husband had made. But Arkwright was not deterred from his pursuit by the poverty of his circumstances or the conduct of his wife. 'After many years intense and painful application,' he invented his memorable machine for spinning by rollers; and laid the foundations of the gigantic industry which has done more than any other trade to concentrate in this country the wealth of the world. The principle of Arkwright's great invention is very simple. He passed the thread over two pairs of rollers, one of which was made to revolve much more rapidly than the other. The thread, after passing over the pair revolving slowly, was drawn into the requisite tenuity by the rollers revolving at a higher rapidity. By this simple but memorable invention Arkwright succeeded in producing thread capable of employment as warp. From the circumstance that the mill at which his machinery was first erected was driven by water power, the machine received the somewhat inappropriate name of the water frame; the thread spun by it was usually called the water twist.

The invention of the fly-shuttle by John Kay had enabled the weavers to consume more cotton than the

spinsters had been able to provide; the invention of the spinning-jenny and the water frame would have been useless if the old system of hand-carding had not been superseded by a more efficient and more rapid process. Just as Arkwright applied rotatory motion to spinning, so Lewis Paul introduced revolving cylinders for carding cotton. Paul's machine consisted of 'a horizontal cylinder, covered in its whole circumference with parallel rows of cards with intervening spaces, and turned by a handle. Under the cylinder was a concave frame, lined internally with cards exactly fitting the lower half of the cylinder, so that, when the handle was turned, the cards of the cylinder and of the concave frame worked against each other and carded the wool.' 'The cardings were of course only of the length of the cylinder, but an ingenious apparatus was attached for making them into a perpetual carding. Each length was placed on a flat broad riband which was extended between two short cylinders and which wound upon one cylinder as it unwound from the other.' [1]

This extraordinary series of inventions placed an almost unlimited supply of yarn at the disposal of the weaver. But the machinery, which had thus been introduced, was still incapable of providing yarn fit for the finer qualities of cotton cloth. 'The water frame spun twist for warps, but it could not be advantageously used for the finer qualities, as thread of great tenuity has not strength to bear the pull of the rollers when winding itself on the bobbin.' This defect, however, was removed by the ingenuity of Samuel Crompton, a young weaver residing near Bolton. Crompton succeeded in combining in one machine the various excellences 'of Arkwright's water frame and Hargreaves' jenny.' Like the former, his machine, which from its nature is happily called the mule, 'has a system of rollers to reduce the roving; and

[1] Baines' *Hist. of the Cotton Manufacture*, p. 174, from which work the preceding quotations are also taken.

CHAP. I.

like the latter it has spindles without bobbins to give the twist, and the thread is stretched and spun at the same time by the spindles after the rollers have ceased to give out the rove. The distinguishing feature of the mule is that the spindles, instead of being stationary, as in both the other machines, are placed on a moveable carriage, which is wheeled out to the distance of fifty-four or fifty-six inches from the roller beam, in order to stretch and twist the thread, and wheeled in again to wind it on the spindles. In the jenny, the clasp, which held the rovings, was drawn back by the hand from the spindles; in the mule, on the contrary, the spindles recede from the clasp, or from the roller beam, which acts as a clasp. The rollers of the mule draw out the roving much less than those of the water frame, and they act like the clasp of the jenny by stopping and holding fast the rove, after a certain quantity has been given out, whilst the spindles continue to recede for a short distance further, so that the draught of the thread is in part made by the receding of the spindles. By this arrangement, comprising the advantages both of the roller and the spindles, the thread is stretched more gently and equably, and a much finer quality of yarn can therefore be produced.' [1]

The effects of Crompton's great invention may be stated epigrammatically. Before Crompton's time it was thought impossible to spin eighty hanks to the pound. The mule has spun three hundred and fifty hanks to the pound! The natives of India could spin a pound of cotton into a thread 119 miles long. The English succeeded in spinning the same thread to a length of 160 miles.[2] Yarn of the finest quality was at once at the disposal of the weaver, and an opportunity was afforded for the production of an indefinite quantity of cotton yarn. But the great inventions, which have been thus enu-

[1] Baines' *Hist. of the Cotton Manufacture*, pp. 197, 198.
[2] Ibid. p. 200, and *Colchester*, vol. ii. p. 75.

merated, would not of themselves have been sufficient to establish the cotton manufacture on its present basis. The ingenuity of Hargreaves, Arkwright, and Crompton had been exercised to provide the weaver with yarn. Their inventions had provided him with more yarn than he could by any possibility use. The spinster had beaten the weaver, just as the weaver had previously beaten the spinster, and the manufacture of cotton seemed likely to stand still because the yarn could not be woven more rapidly than an expert workman with Kay's improved fly shuttle could weave it.

Such a result was actually contemplated by some of the leading manufacturers, and such a result might possibly have temporarily occurred if it had not been averted by the ingenuity of a Kentish clergyman. Edmund Cartwright, a clergyman residing in Kent, happened to be staying at Matlock in the summer of 1784, and to be thrown into the company of some Manchester gentlemen. The conversation turned on Arkwright's machinery, and 'one of the company observed that, as soon as Arkwright's patent expired, so many mills would be erected and so much cotton spun that hands would never be found to weave it.' Cartwright replied 'that Arkwright must then set his wits to work to invent a weaving mill.' The Manchester gentlemen, however, unanimously agreed that the thing was impracticable. Cartwright 'controverted the impracticability by remarking that there had lately been exhibited an automaton figure which played at chess;' it could not be 'more difficult to construct a machine that shall weave than one which shall make all the variety of moves which are required in that complicated game.' Within three years he had himself proved that the invention was practicable by producing the power-loom. Subsequent inventors improved the idea which Cartwright had originated, and within fifty years from the date of his memorable visit to Matlock there were not less

CHAP. I.

than 100,000 power-looms at work in Great Britain alone.[1]

The inventions, which have been thus enumerated, are the most remarkable of the improvements which stimulated the development of the cotton industry. But other inventions, less generally remembered, were hardly less wonderful or less beneficial than these. Up to the middle of last century cotton could only be bleached by the cloth being steeped in alkaline leys for several days, washed clean, and spread on the grass for some weeks to dry. The process had to be repeated several times, and many months were consumed before the tedious operation was concluded. Scheele, the Swedish philosopher, discovered in 1774 the bleaching properties of chlorine, or oxymuriatic acid. Berthollet, the French chemist, conceived in 1785 the idea of applying the acid to bleaching cloth. Watt, the inventor of the steam engine, and Henry of Manchester, respectively introduced the new acid into the bleachfields of Macgregor of Glasgow and Ridgway of Bolton. The process of bleaching was at once reduced from months to days, or even hours.[2]

In the same year in which Watt and Henry were introducing the new acid to the bleacher, Bell, a Scotchman, was laying the foundations of a trade in printed calicoes. 'The old method of printing was by blocks of sycamore, about 10 inches long by 5 broad, on the surface of which the pattern was cut in relief in the common method of wood engraving.' As the block had to be applied to the cloth by hand, 'no more of it could be printed at once than the block could cover, and a single piece of calico, 28 yards in length, required the application of the block 448 times.'[3] This clumsy process was superseded by cylinder printing. A polished copper cylinder, several feet in length, and 3 or 4 inches in diameter, is engraved

[1] Baines' *Cotton*, pp. 229, 235. [2] Ibid. pp. 247–249.
[3] Ibid. pp. 264, 265.

with a pattern round its whole circumference and from end to end. It is then placed horizontally in a press, and, as it revolves, the lower part of the circumference passes through the colouring matter, which is again removed from the whole surface of the cylinder, except the engraved pattern, by an elastic steel blade placed in contact with the cylinder, and reduced to so fine and straight an edge as to take off the colour without scratching the copper. The colour being thus left only in the engraved pattern, the piece of calico or muslin is drawn tightly over the cylinder, which revolves in the same direction, and prints the cloth.' The saving of labour 'effected by the machine' is 'immense: one of the cylinder machines, attended by a man and a boy, is actually capable of producing as much work as could be turned out by one hundred block printers, and as many tear boys.'[1]

Such are the leading inventions, which made Great Britain in less than a century the wealthiest country in the world. 'When we undertook the cotton manufacture we had comparatively few facilities for its prosecution, and had to struggle with the greatest difficulties. The raw material was produced at an immense distance from our shores, and in Hindustan and in China the inhabitants had arrived at such perfection in the arts of spinning and weaving, that the lightness and delicacy of their finest cloths emulated the web of the gossamer, and seemed to set competition at defiance. Such, however, has been the influence of the stupendous discoveries and inventions of Hargreaves, Arkwright, Crompton, Cartwright, and others, that we have overcome all these difficulties—that neither the extreme cheapness of labour in Hindustan, nor the excellence to which the natives had attained, has enabled them to withstand the competition of those, who

[1] Baines' *Cotton*, pp. 265, 266.

CHAP. I.

buy their cotton, and who, after carrying it 5,000 miles to be manufactured, carry back the goods to them.'[1]

Linen.

If Great Britain entirely monopolised the woollen and the cotton trades, she had done her best, in her own way, to promote the manufacture of linen in Ireland. In 1698, Parliament, while rigorously prohibiting the exportation of Irish woollen goods, sedulously attempted to encourage the linen manufacture in Ireland. Bounties were paid on all linen goods imported into this country from the sister island; and the great linen trade acquired, especially in Ulster, the importance which it still retains. In 1800, 31,978,039 yards of linen were exported from Ireland to Great Britain, and 2,585,829 yards to other countries. In 1815, the export trade had risen to 37,986,359 and 5,496,206 yards respectively. A formidable rival to Ulster was, however, slowly rising in another part of the kingdom. At the close of the great French war, Dundee was still an insignificant manufacturing town, but the foundations were already laid of the surprising supremacy which she has since acquired in the linen trade. Some 3,000 tons of flax were imported into the Scotch port in 1814. But the time was rapidly coming when the shipments of linen from this single place were to exceed those from all Ireland, and Dundee was to be spoken of by professed economists as the Manchester of the linen trade.[2]

The silk manufacturers of Britain have never yet succeeded in acquiring the predominance which the woollen, cotton, and linen factors have virtually obtained. The worm, by which the raw material is produced, has never been acclimatised on a large scale in England; and the trade has naturally flourished chiefly in those countries where the worm could live and spin, or where the raw material could be the most easily procured. Insular

[1] McCulloch's *Commercial Dict.*, ad verb. Cotton.
[2] McCulloch, ad verb. Linen; Porter's *Progress of the Nation*, p. 230.

prejudice, moreover, should not induce the historian to forget another reason which has materially interfered with the development of this particular trade. The ingenuity of the British was superior to that of every other nation; but the taste of the British was inferior to that of most people. An article, which was only worn by the rich, and which was only used for its beauty and delicacy, was naturally produced most successfully by the most artistic people. English woollen goods found their way to every continental nation; but the wealthy English imported their finest lustrings and *à la modes* from Italy and France. The silk trade would, in fact, have hardly found a home in England at all had it not been for the folly of a neighbouring potentate. Louis XIV., in a disastrous hour for France, revoked the Edict of Nantes; and the French Huguenots, to their eternal honour, preferring their consciences to their country, sought a home amidst a more liberal people. The silk weavers of France settled in Spitalfields, and the British silk trade gained rapidly on its foreign rivals. Parliament adopted the usual clumsy contrivances to promote an industry whose importance it was no longer possible to ignore. Prohibitory duties, designed to discourage the importation of foreign silk, were imposed by the legislature; monopolies were granted to successful throwsters, and every precaution was taken, which the follies of protection could suggest, to perpetuate the supremacy which Great Britain was gradually acquiring in the silk trade. The usual results followed this short-sighted policy. Prohibitory duties encouraged smuggling. Foreign silk found its way into England, and the revenue was defrauded accordingly. The English trade began to decline, and Parliament again interfered to promote its prosperity. In that unhappy period of English history, which succeeds the fall of Chatham and precedes the rise of Pitt, Parliament adopted fresh expedients to promote the prosperity of the silk

CHAP. I.

trade. Prohibitory duties were replaced with actual prohibition, and elaborate attempts were made to regulate the wages of the Spitalfields weavers. The natural consequences ensued. Smuggling, which had been created by prohibitive duties, flourished with fresh vitality under the influence of actual prohibition. The capitalists transferred their mills from Spitalfields, where the labours of their workmen were fixed by law, to Macclesfield and other places, where master and workman were free to make their own terms.

Steam.

The silk trade was hardly being developed with the same rapidity as the three other textile industries. But silk, like wool, cotton, and linen, was affording a considerable amount of employment to a constantly growing population. The textile industries of this country could not indeed have acquired the importance, which they have since obtained, if the inventions of Hargreaves, Arkwright, Crompton, and Cartwright had not been supplemented by the labours of explorers in another field. Machinery makes possible what man by manual labour alone would find it impossible to perform. But machinery would be an useless incumbrance were it not for the presence of some motive power. From the earliest ages men have endeavoured to supplement the brute force of animals with the more powerful forces which nature has placed at their disposal. The ox was not to be perpetually used to tread out the corn; women were not always to pass their days laboriously grinding at a mill. The movement of the atmosphere, the flow of running water, were to be taken into alliance with man; and the invention of windmills and water-mills was to mark an advance in the onward march of civilisation. But air and water, mighty forces as they are, proved but fickle and uncertain auxiliaries. When the wind was too low its strength was insufficient to turn the cumbrous sails of the mill; when it was too high it deranged the complicated machinery of the miller

The miller who trusted to water was hardly more fortunate than the man who relied upon air. A summer drought reduced the power of his wheel at the very time when long days and fine weather made him anxious to accomplish the utmost possible amount of work. A flood swept away the dam on which his mill depended for its supply of water. An admirable auxiliary during certain portions of each year, water was occasionally too strong, occasionally too weak, for the purposes of the miller.

The manufacturing industry of the country stood, therefore, in need of a new motive power; and invention, which is supposed by some thinkers to depend like other commodities on the laws of demand and supply, was busily elaborating a new problem—the use of a novel power, which was to revolutionise the world. The elasticity of hot water had long been noticed, and, for a century and a half before the period of this history, a few advanced thinkers had been speculating on the possibility of utilising the expansive powers of steam. The Marquis of Worcester had described, in his 'Century of Inventions,' 'an admirable and most forcible way to drive up water by means of fire.' Steam was actually used early in the eighteenth century as a motive power for pumping water from mines; and Newcomen, a blacksmith in Dartmouth, invented a tolerably efficient steam engine. It was not, however, till 1769 that James Watt, a native of Greenock, and a mathematical instrument maker in Glasgow, obtained his first patent for 'methods of lessening the consumption of steam, and consequently of fuel, in fire-engines.' James Watt was born in 1736. His father was a magistrate, and had the good sense to encourage the turn for mechanics which his son displayed at a very early age. At the age of nineteen Watt was placed with a mathematical instrument maker in London. But a feeble health, which had interfered with his studies as a boy, prevented him from pursuing his avocations in England.

CHAP. I.

Watt returned to his native country. The Glasgow body of Arts and Trades, however, refused to allow him to exercise his calling within the limits of their jurisdiction; and had it not been for the University of Glasgow, which befriended him in his difficulty, and appointed him their mathematical instrument maker, the career of one of the greatest geniuses, whom Great Britain has produced, would have been stinted at its outset.

There happened to be in the University a model of Newcomen's engine. It happened, too, that the model was defectively constructed. Watt, in the ordinary course of his business, was asked to remedy its defects, and he soon succeeded in doing so. But his examination of the model convinced him of serious faults in the original. Newcomen had injected cold water into the cylinder in order to condense the steam and thus obtain a necessary vacuum for the piston to work in. Watt discovered that three fourths of the fuel which the engine consumed were required to reheat the cylinder. 'It occurred to him that, if the condensation could be performed in a separate vessel, communicating with the cylinder, the latter could be kept hot while the former was cooled, and the vapour arising from the injected water could also be prevented from impairing the vacuum. The communication could easily be effected by a tube, and the water could be pumped out. This is the first and the grand invention by which he at once saved three fourths of the fuel, and increased the power one fourth, thus making every pound of coal produce five times the force formerly obtained from it.'[1] But Watt was not satisfied with this single improvement. He introduced steam above as well as below the piston, and thus again increased the power of the machine. He discovered the principle of parallel motion, and thus made the piston move in a true straight line. He regulated the supply of water to the boiler

[1] Lord Brougham's *Men of Letters and Science*, p. 367.

by the means of 'floats,' the supply of steam to the cylinder by the application of 'the governor,' and, by the addition of all these discoveries, 'satisfied himself that he had almost created a new engine, of incalculable power, universal application, and inestimable value.'[1] It is unnecessary to relate in these pages the gradual introduction of the new machine to the manufacturing public. Watt was first connected with Dr. Roebuck, an ironmaster of Glasgow. But his name is permanently associated with that of Mr. Boulton, the proprietor of the Soho Works near Birmingham, whose partner he became in 1774. Watt and Boulton rapidly supplemented the original invention with further improvements. Other inventors succeeded in the same field, and, by the beginning of the present century, steam was established as a new force; advanced thinkers were considering the possibility of applying it to purposes of locomotion.

Iron.

The steam engine indeed would not have been invented in the eighteenth century, or would not at any rate have been discovered in this country, if it had not been for the vast mineral wealth with which Great Britain has fortunately been provided. Iron, the most useful of all metals, presents greater difficulties than any other of them to the manufacturer, and iron was probably one of the very last minerals which was applied to the service of man. Centuries elapsed before the rich mines of our own country were even slightly worked. The Romans indeed established iron works in Gloucestershire, just as they obtained tin from Cornwall or lead from Wales. But the British did not imitate the example of their earliest conquerors, and the little iron which was used in this country was imported from abroad. Some progress was, no doubt, made in the southern counties; the smelters naturally seeking their ores in those places where wood, then the only available fuel, was to be found in abundance. The railings, which

[1] Lord Brougham's *Men of Letters and Science*, p. 371.

CHAP. I.

but lately encircled our metropolitan cathedral, were cast in Sussex. But the prosperity of the trade involved its own ruin. Iron could not be made without large quantities of fuel. The wood gradually disappeared before the operations of the smelter, and the country gentlemen hesitated to sell their trees for fuel when the increase of shipping was creating a growing demand for timber. Nor were the country gentlemen animated in this respect by purely selfish motives. Parliament itself shared their apprehensions and endorsed their views. It regarded the constant destruction of timber with such disfavour that it seriously contemplated the suppression of the iron trade as the only practicable remedy. 'Many think,' said a contemporary writer, 'that there should be no works anywhere, they so devour the woods.'[1] Fortunately, so crucial a remedy was not necessary. At the commencement of the seventeenth century, Dud Dudley, a natural son of Lord Dudley, had proved the feasibility of smelting iron with coal, but the prejudice and ignorance of the workpeople had prevented the adoption of his invention. In the middle of the eighteenth century attention was again drawn to his process, and the possibility of substituting coal for wood was conclusively established at the Darby's works in Coalbrook Dale. The impetus which was thus given to the iron trade was extraordinary. The total produce of the country amounted at the time to only 18,000 tons of iron a year, four fifths of the iron used being imported from Sweden. In 1802 Great Britain possessed 168 blast furnaces, and produced 170,000 tons of iron annually. In 1806 the produce had risen to 250,000 tons; it had increased in 1820 to 400,000 tons. Fifty years afterwards, or in 1870, 6,000,000 tons of iron were produced from British ores.[2]

[1] Smiles' *Industrial Biography*, p. 43.

[2] *Pict. Hist.*, vol. iv. p. 689; McCulloch, *Dict. of Commerce*, ad verb. Iron; Porter's *Progress of the Nation*, p. 250; statistical abstract of the United Kingdom.

The progress of the iron trade indicated, of course, a corresponding development of the supply of coal. Coal had been used in England for domestic purposes from very early periods. Sea coal had been brought to London; but the citizens had complained that the smoke was injurious to their health, and had persuaded the legislature to forbid the use of coal on sanitary grounds. The convenience of the new fuel triumphed, however, over the arguments of the sanitarians and the prohibitions of the legislature, and coal continued to be brought in constantly though slowly increasing quantities to London. Its use for smelting iron led to new contrivances for ensuring its economical production. Before the commencement of the present century there were two great difficulties which interfered with the operations of the miner. The roof of the mine had necessarily to be propped, and, as no one had thought of using wood, and coal itself was employed for the purpose, only 60 per cent. of the produce of each mine was raised above ground. About the beginning of the nineteenth century, timber struts were gradually substituted for the pillars of coal, and it became consequently possible to raise from the mine all the coal won by the miner. A still more important discovery was made at the exact period at which this history commences. The coal miner in his underground calling was constantly exposed to the dangers of fire damp, and was liable to be destroyed without a moment's notice by the most fearful catastrophe. In the year in which the great French war was concluded, Sir Humphrey Davy succeeded in perfecting his safety lamp, an invention which enabled the most dangerous mines to be worked with comparative safety, and thus augmented to an extraordinary extent the available supplies of coal.[1]

Humphrey Davy was the son of a wood carver of Penzance, and early in life was apprenticed to a local

[1] Porter's *Progress of the Nation*, p. 277; McCulloch, ad verb. Coal.

CHAP. I.

apothecary. Chance—of which other men would perhaps have failed to avail themselves—gave the lad an opportunity of cultivating his taste for chemistry. A French surgeon, wrecked on the coast, to whom Davy had shown some kindness, gave him a case of surgical instruments, and 'the means of making some approximation to an exhausting engine.' Watt's son, Gregory Watt, was ordered to winter in Cornwall for his health, and happened to take apartments in the house of Davy's mother. 'Another accident threw him in the way of Mr. Davies Giddy, a cultivator of natural as well as mathematical science.' Giddy 'gave to Davy the use of an excellent library;' he 'introduced him to Dr. Beddoes,' who made his young friend the head of 'a pneumatic institution for the medical use of gases,' which he was then forming. The publication, soon afterwards, of a fanciful paper on light and heat gave Davy a considerable reputation. He was successively chosen assistant lecturer in chemistry, and sole chemical professor, of the Royal Institution. While he held this office his inquiries induced him to investigate the causes of the fearful explosions which continually took place in coal mines. He soon satisfied himself that carburetted hydrogen is the cause of fire damp; and that it will not explode unless mixed with atmospheric air 'in proportions between six and fourteen times its bulk;' and 'he was surprised to observe in the course of his experiments, made for ascertaining how the inflammation takes place, that the flames will not pass through tubes of a certain length and smallness of bore. He then found that, if the length be diminished and the bore also reduced, the flames will not pass; and he further found that, by multiplying the number of the tubes, this length may be safely diminished provided the bore be proportionally lessened. Hence it appeared that gauze of wire, whose meshes were only one twenty-second of an inch in diameter, stopped the flame and prevented

the explosion.'[1] These successive discoveries, the results of repeated experiments and careful thought, led to the invention of the safety lamp. The first safety lamp was made in the year 1815. There is some satisfaction in reflecting that the very year, which was memorable for the conclusion of the longest and most destructive of modern wars, was also remarkable for one of the most beneficial discoveries which have ever been given to mankind. Even the peace of Paris did not probably save more life or avert more suffering than Sir Humphrey Davy's invention. The gratitude of a nation properly bestowed titles and pensions, lands and houses, stars and honours, on the conqueror of Napoleon. Custom and precedent only allowed inferior rewards to the inventor of the safety lamp. Yet Hargreaves and Arkwright, Crompton and Cartwright, Watt and Davy, did more for the cause of mankind than even Wellington. Their lives had more influence on their country's future than the career of the great general. His victories secured his country peace for rather more than a generation. Their inventions gave Great Britain a commercial supremacy, which neither war nor foreign competition has yet destroyed.

A series of extraordinary inventions, at the commencement of the present century, had supplied Great Britain with a new manufacturing vigour. Hargreaves, Arkwright, Crompton, and Cartwright had developed, to a remarkable degree, the producing power of man; Watt had given a new significance to their inventions by superseding the feeble and unequal forces, which had hitherto been used, with the most tractable and powerful of agents. And Davy, by his beneficent contrivance, had enabled coal to be won with less danger, and had relieved the miner's life from one of its most hideous perils. The ingenuity of these great men had been exercised with

[1] See Brougham's *Men of Letters and Science*, p. 462. The life of Davy is admirably told by Lord Brougham.

CHAP. I.

different objects; but the inventions of each of them had given fresh importance to the discoveries of the others. The spinning-jenny, the water frame, and the mule would have been deprived of half their value if they had not been supplemented with the power-loom; the power-loom would, in many places, have been useless without the steam engine; the steam engine would have been idle had it not been for coal; and coal could not have been won without great danger, had it not been for Sir H. Davy. Coal, then, was the commodity whose extended use was gradually revolutionising the world; and the population of the world, as the first consequence of the change, gradually moved towards the coal fields. The change was just commencing at the beginning of the present century; it was proceeding with rapid strides at the period at which this history opens; its ultimate effects will be seen later on in this work. The time was to come when the coal measures of England were to draw away the population of Ireland; to weaken the power of the southern agricultural counties; to give predominance to the north of England; and by these results to involve a political revolution.

Population.

In the earlier ages of the world population followed, as a rule, the navigable rivers. They were the great roads with which the country was intersected; they afforded the almost only available means for bringing the productions of the interior to a profitable market. The navigation of the Danube involves, at the present moment, the nicest international questions. The navigation of the Mississippi was on the eve of driving the Western States of America into alliance with the South. The produce of the gigantic empire which frowns on the eastern flank of Europe is slowly floated down its huge rivers to the uncertain and difficult outlets which it possesses in the Baltic and Black Seas. The rivers of this country were at least as advantageous to our ancestors as the Mississippi

is to the Western States of America; or the Danube, the Dnieper, the Don, and the Volga are now to the Austrian and Russian empires. It will be easily understood that the value of a river for navigable purposes depends on the comparative flatness of the valley which it drains; and the proportion which its estuary bears to its entire course. A flat valley is generally productive of a quiet and deep stream; and the navigator, in the most primitive of vessels, escapes the dangers of being upset in a rapid current, or stranded on an inconvenient shallow. A long estuary benefits almost equally the outward and the homeward trade. The vessels are carried on the ebbing tide to the seas which are to bear them to the countries whither they are bound; they are borne on the flood tide towards the port to which they are bringing the various productions of other nations.

The rivers of Great Britain, and especially those in the south and east of England, have the double advantage of long estuaries and of draining comparatively flat valleys. The most cursory inspection of the map of England will show that the greater portion of the country is divided into three great watersheds. A large portion of the north of England is drained by the great affluents of the Humber—the Swale, the Ure, the Nidd, the Wharfe, the Aire, the Don, and the Trent. The south-east of England is watered by the Thames and the Medway. While the Wye, the Severn, the Avon, the Usk, and the Parret mix their streams in the Bristol Channel. The great rivers, which drained these three watersheds, formed originally the main roads of England; though many minor streams, the Ouse, the Yare, the Exe, the Wiltshire Avon, the Itchen, for example, either from their volume or the excellence of their estuaries, were also available for purposes of locomotion.

As every town is necessarily dependent on a road, so towns in the olden time were usually built on the best

CHAP. I

roads which were then available, the rivers. In the noblest chapter which he ever wrote, Macaulay tells us that in the days of Charles II. the three chief towns of England were London, Bristol, and Norwich. Next to them in importance were York, the capital of the North, and Exeter, the capital of the West. Every one of these places is situated not merely on a great river, but on a great estuary. London owed its wealth and prosperity to the Thames. 'Civitatis fundationis, constructionis, ædificationis causa erat Thamesis.' Bristol on the Avon had the Severn at her feet. Norwich on the Yare had easy access to the sea, the great highway of the world. York on the Ouse had direct communication through the Derwent, the Ure, the Wharfe, and the Don, with every corner of the county of which it was the capital; while, through the aid of the Trent, it had another road to the rich midland counties of England. Last of all, Exeter, seated on the Exe, was in close communication with the English Channel. So long as the rivers were the best, or even the only practicable, roads in England, the places, which had thus acquired the first rank in the kingdom, maintained their superiority. But in the middle of the eighteenth century a great nobleman, with the aid of a great engineer, proved the practicability of introducing a totally new kind of road, and eventually effected the supercession of the river by the canal. The difficulty of leading a canal from one town to another arises from the difference in the levels of the adjoining country. The Chinese, who were apparently at one time the most ingenious of the human race, but whose ingenuity has become stationary under the influence of a cold and indomitable conservatism, were perhaps the first people in the world who designed a canal. The English, who, under the influence of free institutions, and with the encouragement of free trade, have obtained a supremacy in commerce which no other country has ever enjoyed, were

Canals.

nearly the last nation to adopt this useful expedient for the development of their resources. The first canal in England was commenced in 1755, but it was not till 1758 that the great Duke of Bridgewater commenced, with Brindley's aid, the gigantic canal from Runcorn to Manchester, which immortalised its founder's name, and ultimately changed the whole face of the country.

Francis, Duke of Bridgewater, did perhaps more to promote the prosperity of this country than all the dukes, marquises, and earls combined, who, before his time, had been born into the world. Born in 1736, the fifth and youngest son of his father, there seemed little chance that he would ever inherit the title. He was, too, a 'weak and sickly' child, and his mental capacity was thought so slender that steps were 'contemplated' to set him aside in favour of the next heir.[1] By the time, however, that he had completed his twelfth year, the weak and sickly child had survived his four brothers, and had succeeded to his father's title. Five years later 'his guardians, finding him still alive and likely to live,' sent him, in company with his tutor, Robert Wood, to travel on the Continent. In the course of his travels, he is said to have been peculiarly interested in the magnificent canal of Languedoc, with which, seventy years previously, Pierre Riquet de Bonrepos had united the Atlantic and the Mediterranean. Returned home, the duke threw himself into the gaieties of London life. At that time, the three Miss Gunnings were 'the reigning beauties' at Court. The eldest sister was married to Lord Coventry; the youngest, and most beautiful of the three, had been wedded to the fourth Duke of Hamilton, in Keith's Chapel, Mayfair, 'with a ring of the bed-curtain, half an hour after twelve at night.'[2] The duke had not long survived his midnight marriage. His duchess

[1] Smiles' *Early Engineers*, p. 154.
[2] Walpole to Mann, Feb. 27, 1752. Smiles' *Early Engineers*, p. 157.

CHAP. I.

had been left a youthful and fascinating widow, and easily won the affections of the young Duke of Bridgewater. Their union had been already arranged, when the duke heard some stories which reflected on his future sister-in-law, Lady Coventry. He desired the Duchess of Hamilton to 'desist from intimacy with her sister.' The duchess refused, and the young couple separated for ever—the duke to devote his patrimony to the construction of canals, and the duchess to marry Jack Campbell and to become Duchess of Argyll.

Twenty years before the Duke of Bridgewater separated from the Duchess of Hamilton, the duke's father had obtained powers to make the Worsley brook navigable from his collieries at Worsley to the Irwell. The duke determined to carry out the enterprise which his father had originated. He was fortunate, at the very outset, to secure the services of one of the most remarkable men whom this country ever produced, James Brindley. Brindley was born in a remote hamlet in Derbyshire in 1716: he was, therefore, twenty years older than his noble patron. At the age of seventeen he bound himself apprentice to a local wheelwright, but at the outset of his career he had either so little dexterity, or his master had so little patience, that he was declared to be 'a mere spoiler of wood.' Two years afterwards, however, his master happened to send him to remove some damaged machinery from a mill which had been burnt down, and the superintendent, struck with the lad's conversation and good sense, stipulated that the 'bungling apprentice' should be employed to execute the repairs. Brindley did the work, and did it so well that the neighbouring mill-owners, when they required his master's assistance, always specially asked that Brindley might be sent to them. His master even remonstrated with him for doing his work too completely. But Brindley, though he had already shown himself an excellent workman, had given

no signs of his extraordinary mechanical genius. His master had been employed on the machinery of a new paper mill on the river Dane. The work was far beyond his skill, and, after a short time, his failure was evident. Brindley resolved to save his master's reputation and business, and, quietly leaving his own work, walked to Manchester. There he was allowed to inspect some similar machinery, and having learned its details, returned to his master. The latter was astonished to find him one Monday morning quietly engaged on the work with which he himself had been so fruitlessly occupied. The task was not only successfully completed, but Brindley introduced several new improvements which had not been known before. The improvements were universally approved: Brindley's reputation was established, and his ingenuity as a mechanist and excellence as a workman gained him constantly increasing employment in the midland counties.

Brindley had accidentally become acquainted with Thomas Gilbert, the very shrewd, practical, and enterprising steward of the Duke of Bridgewater; and Gilbert introduced the millwright to the duke. Brindley decided that it was not merely practicable to make the canal from Worsley to Manchester, but that it was advisable and possible to cross the Irwell at Barton with an aqueduct. The project was ridiculed by even scientific persons: it was called Brindley's 'castle in the air,' and the duke was strongly advised to recede from a purposeless expenditure. Happily, however, he had the good sense to put faith in the one man who was responsible for his work, and to reject the counsel of the irresponsible many. The castle in the air was successfully erected: the whole canal was completed; the people of Manchester had the advantage of a cheap supply of coal from Worsley, and the duke gained the benefit of a ready market for the produce of his collieries.

CHAP. I.

The success, which had attended the construction of the canal from Worsley to Manchester, induced the duke to attempt a much more important enterprise—the union of Manchester and Liverpool with a water road. The scheme provoked much greater opposition than the smaller one which had been already carried out. The proprietors of the Mersey and Irwell navigation foresaw that the construction of a canal would lead to the abandonment of the river, and opposed, for their own selfish ends, the great work which the duke was promoting. The work, too, necessitated far greater expenditure on the part of the promoter, far greater skill on that of the engineer, than the shorter and easier canal which had already been made. But the ability of Brindley overcame every difficulty: the perseverance of the duke triumphed over his want of money. Limiting his personal expenditure to a few hundreds a year, the duke devoted the whole of his vast income to the great undertaking which has immortalised him. Though his credit fell to the lowest ebb, he succeeded, with the assistance of his bankers, in tiding over his worst difficulties: and, after five years of incessant anxiety, had the satisfaction of seeing the last portion of his great work successfully completed, and of finding himself the fortunate possessor of a princely property.[1] The levity of the female sex has been the cause of many sorrows to mankind: the lightness of Lady Coventry probably occasioned many a heartache to the young Duke of Bridgewater. But never previously had light conduct in a woman produced such beneficial consequences to the human race. The Duke of Bridgewater had been driven from society to devote himself to the noblest enterprise ever undertaken by any individual in any country or in any age, and his devotion had laid the foundations of the prosperity of two of the most prosperous of English cities—Manchester at

[1] See Smiles' admirable account of this event in the *Life of Brindley*.

one end, Liverpool at the other terminus, of his great water road.

The successful completion of this great work necessarily encouraged the commencement of similar undertakings in other places. Brindley was himself engaged on the Grand Trunk Canal, which united the Mersey and the Trent, and similar schemes were carried out with success both by himself and the other engineers who followed in his footsteps. 'The country became thoroughly opened up in all directions by about 2,600 miles of navigable canals in England, 276 miles in Ireland, and 225 miles in Scotland.' 'At the beginning of the present century,' says Dr. Aiken, writing in 1795, 'it was thought a most arduous task to make a high road practicable for carriages over the hills and moors which separate Lancashire from Yorkshire, and now they are pierced through by three navigable canals.'[1] 'It is probable,' to quote a striking observation of Sir James Mackintosh, 'that the quantity of labour employed in England on docks, canals, and other useful works during the last fifty years (1760–1810) is greater than that employed on all the boasted works of Asia, from the Wall of China to the Pyramids.'[2]

The introduction of canals into England was due to the ingenuity and perseverance of Brindley; another great engineer, soon afterwards, effected a new and different improvement in locomotion. Roads are apparently one of the simplest contrivances, which man has adopted, for the development of the resources of a country; but good roads were one of the very last improvements which were introduced into modern Europe. The Romans, indeed, carried their great military roads through every country which they conquered: and every traveller has seen, and every map of England bears traces of, the admirable thoroughfares which were thus constructed throughout the country. But the art of road-making fell into decay.

Roads.

[1] Smiles' *Brindley*, p. 298.

[2] Mackintosh, vol. ii. p. 78.

CHAP. I.

in the Middle Ages, and, in the eighteenth century, the best roads were little better than bridle tracks, obstructed with mud at one period of the year, and with deep and dangerous ruts at another. Towards the middle of the eighteenth century attention was seriously directed to the loss and delay which bad roads occasioned;[1] but it was not till the latter half of it that a very remarkable man first proved the possibility of constructing better highways. John Metcalf, the son of poor parents in Knaresborough, had the misfortune to lose his sight in 1723, when he was only six years old. But the boy, notwithstanding this loss, joined in the rough sports of his playmates. He climbed trees, and, guided by the directions of his comrades, actually took birds' nests; he learned to swim, and saved the lives of some of his companions; he rode and won a race at Harrogate; walked alone and found his way to London; married, and maintained his wife and himself with his fiddle. In 1765 Parliament passed an Act authorising the construction of a new turnpike road between Harrogate and Boroughbridge, and Metcalf offered to make three miles of the road, and completed his work with unusual speed. Encouraged by his success, he undertook to build a bridge at Boroughbridge: the trustees let him the work, which he again succeeded in completing satisfactorily. His success on these two occasions led to his constant employment: 180 miles of road were constructed by him; the Huddersfield and Manchester road was carried by him over a bog which had been thought impracticable; and, what is more extraordinary, the blind man not only carried out 'the highways designed for him by other surveyors, but himself personally surveyed and laid out many of the most importants roads which he constructed.'[2]

[1] See, *inter alia*, Meteyard's *Wedgwood*, vol. i. p. 267.

[2] Smiles' *Telford*, p. 89, to which I am indebted for many of the preceding details.

While Metcalf was making his three miles of highway between Harrogate and Boroughbridge, Thomas Telford, the only son of a poor widow, was herding sheep in Eskdale, and gaining some slight instruction in the parish school of Westerkirk. At fifteen he had passed from the sheep walk to a mason's at Lochmaben, and was diligently learning his master's business in the daytime, and reading books in the evening, lent to him by a kind lady who lived in the neighbourhood. Even at that time, an obscure mason's apprentice, in a then remote valley, he seems to have had faith in his own industry and in his own abilities.

> 'Nor pass the tentie curious lad,
> Who o'er the ingle hangs his head,
> And begs of neighbours books to read,
> *For hence arise*
> *Thy country's sons, who far are spread,*
> *Baith bold and wise.*

So wrote he in rhyme—which proves that his education had not been useless—to Burns.

At twenty-five years of age, or in 1782, Telford set out for London, where he was employed, as an ordinary mason, on Somerset House. The excellence of his workmanship probably commended him to his employers, for, in 1784, he was engaged to superintend some works at Portsmouth. In 1786 he removed to Shropshire to advise Mr. Pulteney, the member for Shrewsbury, on some alterations which he intended to make in the castle. While at Shrewsbury, Mr. Pulteney's influence gained him an appointment as surveyor of public works to the county; and he became involved in the miscellaneous business connected with this office;—prison building, bridge repairing, road improving. This appointment, however, was in its turn rapidly succeeded by another. Brindley's success had led to the construction of new canals in every part of the kingdom. It was decided to

CHAP. I.

unite the Mersey, the Don, and the Severn, with a water road; and Telford was made engineer of the new canal at a salary of 500*l.* a year.

The construction of this canal, or the Ellesmere Canal, as it is called, at once placed Telford at the very summit of his profession. The magnificent aqueducts, by which it is carried over the Ceriog and the Dee, far surpassed anything which had, up to that time, been attempted; and even now rank among the very greatest achievements of our engineers. But Telford, in the meanwhile, had the merit of gaining distinction in another field. His duties as a county surveyor necessarily compelled him to turn his attention to bridge building; and his experience on the Ellesmere Canal taught him the use which might be made of iron for the purpose. An iron bridge had been erected in 1779 in Coalbrookdale; in 1787 the notorious Tom Paine proposed to bridge the Schuylkill in Philadelphia with a single iron arch of 400 feet span. The bridge, which he had designed for the purpose, was rearranged by Burdon, and placed across the Wear at Sunderland in 1796. In the same year in which the bridge at Sunderland was erected, Telford constructed the first of his numerous iron bridges at Buildwas. The possibility of using iron for such a purpose materially facilitated the progress of road improvement, in which, during the rest of his life, Telford was so busily occupied.

The roads before Telford's time had three different defects. In the first place they were badly engineered. No one had yet mastered the lesson, which might have been learned from every milkpail, that the handle is no longer when it is lying flat on the pail than when it is held in the dairymaid's hand; and that a flat road going round a hill need not necessarily be longer than a steep incline going over it. In the next place the roads were imperfectly constructed. They were so narrow that

there was not room for two vehicles to pass; they were so flat or hollow that the rain did not run off them; and the metalling was so rotten that they were almost impassable. In the third place, there were no bridges with which the rivers could be crossed; and a high flood put an absolute bar to the communication between the most important towns. It, indeed, no longer took, as it had taken seventy years before, two whole days to go from Birmingham to London in the summer season.[1] But, at the time at which this history opens, the communication between London and Dublin and London and Edinburgh was most imperfect. A parliamentary committee declared in 1814 'the road between Carlisle and Glasgow to be in so ruinous a state as often seriously to delay the mail, and endanger the lives of the passengers.' In 1815 the Irish mail 'took forty-one hours to reach Holyhead from the time of its setting out from St. Martin's-le-Grand.' It was natural that Telford's assistance should be invoked, both to remedy the roads in Wales, and the roads in Scotland. He was employed by the Government to open up the Highlands; and 920 miles of road were made, and 1,200 bridges were built, in eighteen years, viz. from 1802 to 1820, under his supervision. The new roads changed the aspect of the country. 'Agriculture made rapid progress. The use of carts became practicable, and manure was no longer carried to the fields on women's backs. Sloth and idleness gradually disappeared before the energy, activity, and industry which were called into life by improved communications. Better built cottages took the place of the old mud biggins with holes in their roof to let out the smoke. The pigs and cattle were treated to a separate table. The dunghill was turned to the outside of the house. Tartan tatters gave place to the produce of Manchester and Glasgow looms; and very soon few young

[1] Meteyard's *Wedgwood*, vol. i. p. 243, note.

CHAP. I.

persons were to be found who could not both read and write English.'[1]

Telford's roads had called a new Scotland into existence. But Telford's name was as powerful in North Wales as in the Highlands. The magnificent aqueducts across the Ceriog and the Dee, which still excite the admiration of every traveller, are eternal monuments of his boldness as an engineer and of his skill as a constructor. Great, however, as his triumphs had been, Telford, in 1815, was on the eve of accomplishing even greater achievements. He was under instructions at that time to improve the thoroughfare to the capital of Scotland and the capital of Ireland. The first of these commissions led to the construction, within a few months after its commencement, of the finest road which had up to that time been made in Great Britain. The second of them was completed ten years afterwards by the suspension of the most graceful and marvellous of bridges across the Menai Straits. No other engineer has perpetuated his memory with a more enduring monument.

Before Telford's time the roads were repaired—if such a word may be applied to the process—by throwing on them unbroken gravel or flints with no points to enable them to coalesce with each other. Telford's roads, on the contrary, were constructed on a permanent foundation of large stones, covered with a layer of smaller ones, broken to a suitable size, and bound together by the addition of gravel. At the same time another Scotchman—MacAdam—was applying the same system to the Bristol roads, of which he was made surveyor-general. MacAdam used to say that no stone should be laid on a road which was not small enough to enter a man's mouth. MacAdam was in one sense unfortunate. He died a poor man. But, in another sense, he was

[1] Smiles' *Telford*, pp. 205, 246, 255. I am indebted to Mr. Smiles' work for most of the materials of this account of roadmaking in England.

the most fortunate of inventors. Hargreaves' great invention immortalised the name of his wife. But MacAdam's name—if the term may be allowed—was 'macadamised' into our language. While macadamised roads continue to exist, posterity can hardly forget the debt which it owes to MacAdam.

Improved roads, at the period under review, gave an extraordinary impulse to travelling. In April, 1820, Sir Walter Scott travelled from London to Scotland at the rate of ten miles an hour; but the feat was so extraordinary that it was thought proper to chronicle it in the 'Annual Register.' The poorest third-class passenger can now accomplish the same journey in less than one-fourth of the time. In the same year the Post Office started an extraordinary post, by which letters were conveyed at double rates to distant towns at a speed of eleven miles an hour. Serious doubts were, however, freely expressed as to the wisdom of this reform. Four years previously, or in 1816, the Trafalgar and Regulator coaches ran from Manchester to Liverpool in two hours and fifty minutes, or at the rate of twelve miles an hour. In the same year some speculative Jews ran a coach from London to Brighton in six hours. In one of the journeys the coachman broke three whips, and in one week fifteen horses died! The speed, however, seemed so alarming that the parish officers at Newington laid an injunction against the drivers for furious driving, and the pace was reduced. No one seems to have imagined that any reduction of speed was necessary in the interests of humanity.[1]

The Brighton coach was forced to reduce its speed. But coaches were everywhere travelling at rates which would have seemed incredible a few years previously. Busy men, revelling in new wealth, were no longer

[1] *Hansard*, vol. xxxiv. p. 1041; *Ann. Reg.*, 1806, p. 161; 1820, p. 161, 263. On one occasion, in 1822, George IV. left Brighton at 8 A.M., and reached London at 12.40 P.M.; *Ann. Reg.*, 1822, Chron., p. 12. So far as I know, this is the fastest carriage journey on record.

CHAP. I.

willing to stay perpetually at home, or to consume three days in a journey between London and Birmingham. The old unwieldy vehicles, and the stout but slow horses, with which they had been previously drawn, were discarded for lighter coaches, in many instances admirably horsed. The astonished traveller was whirled along at the rate of ten or even twelve miles an hour; and the utmost possible speed in travelling seemed to have been attained when the fleetest of domestic animals was galloped from one end of the stage to the other. One thousand three hundred and fifty-five public stage coaches were assessed in 1812. The number was more than doubled in the next thirteen years. People flew about the country as they had never done before; and remote towns, which had stagnated for generations in torpor and isolation, breathed with a new and healthier life in consequence of the daily passage of the coach. The improved coaches soon led to an accelerated postal service. Up to 1784, or within the lifetime of persons who are still alive, the mails were conveyed either on horseback or in carts specially constructed for the purpose. In 1784, however, John Palmer, of Bath, suggested the common-sense alternative of employing the ordinary coaches for the purpose. The service of the post was both accelerated and improved by the change; and the Government obtained a considerable addition to the revenue. The gross receipts of the Post Office amounted in 1816 to 2,193,000*l.*; the net profits to 1,526,000*l.* The former were five times, the latter nearly ten times, as large as they had been before the adoption of Palmer's reform. But the rates which the public had to pay for the convenience of sending letters were still excessive. No letter was carried for less than 2*d.*; and a letter was only conveyed for a short distance of seven miles for this sum. A letter from London to Windsor cost 5*d.*; a letter from London to Cambridge 8*d.*; a letter from London to Durham a shil-

The Post.

ling. Certain privileged individuals were indeed allowed to send their letters free. The frank of a member of Parliament saved these gentlemen and their friends from the penalty of excessive postage. The privilege was scandalously abused. The most conscientious persons granted franks on the lightest application, and on the most unreasonable grounds. That portion of the public, which had the privilege of a member's acquaintance, conducted their correspondence for nothing. The larger portion, who knew no members, or who were too proud to ask a favour for the sake of saving a shilling, were charged excessive rates of postage.

Improved roads, then, at the period at which this history commences, had added new facilities to locomotion on land. The introduction of canals had amplified and extended communication by water. The new roads enabled the light traffic to be conducted at unprecedented rates of speed. The canals carried the heavy traffic with extraordinary cheapness. It seemed impossible for the ingenuity of man to devise easier or better means of communication: yet the ingenuity of man was on the eve of superseding the coach and the barge with new methods of locomotion. Many years were still to pass before the completion of the first railway worked by steam. But the first British steamer steamed down the Clyde before the termination of the Peninsular War. Steam navigation was introduced, almost contemporaneously, by Fulton in America and Bell in Scotland. Henry Bell was born in Linlithgowshire in 1767. He was educated at the parish school, and apprenticed to his uncle, a millwright. Later on in life he served under a ship-modeller at Bo'ness, and under Rennie, the great engineer, in London. Returning to Scotland he settled first at Glasgow, and subsequently at Helensburgh, where his wife kept an inn, while he devoted himself to mechanical pursuits. At the beginning of 1812 he had the satisfaction of overcoming the

CHAP. I.

various difficulties in his way, and of seeing the 'Comet,' a small steamer of twenty-five tons' burden, and three horse-power, steam down the Clyde at the rate of seven miles an hour. Considerable interest was felt at the new invention. But no one dreamed, on first seeing the 'Comet,' of the future of steam. It was thought impracticable to construct a steamer capable of carrying sufficient coal for a long voyage, and the dangers of even short voyages were considerable. The boilers were continually exploding; the newspapers of the day had constantly to chronicle serious and fatal accidents in consequence; and the House of Commons found it necessary in 1817 to appoint a committee to enquire into the subject. Experience and skill, however, soon diminished the danger of these explosions. Within eight years of the first voyage of the 'Comet,' the first steamer crossed the Atlantic. The subsequent progress of steam was rapid. There were only two steamers, with a tonnage of 456 tons, in the whole British Empire in 1814. There were 126 steamers, with a tonnage of 15,739 tons in 1824! There were 462 steamers, with a tonnage of 50,735 tons, in 1834; and 988 steamers, with a tonnage of 125,675 tons in 1844! In 1874, 4,033 steamers, with a tonnage of 1,870,611 tons, belonged to the United Kingdom alone.[1]

In 1814, however, the foremost thinkers could not realise the future that was before them. Mackintosh, who was passing an exile's life in Bombay, mentioned in his Diary in 1811 that 'a passage yacht, wrought against wind and tide by a steam engine of the power of twenty horses, goes now from New York to Albany, and performs one hundred and sixty miles in thirty-two hours. This is going at the rate of five miles an hour, and would insure a passage from Portsmouth to Bombay in about

[1] *Hans.* vol. xxxvi. p. 271; *Enc. Brit.*, ad verb. Bell; *Ann. Reg.* 1817, pp. 24, 54, 55, 60; 1819, p. 41; Porter's *Progress of the Nation*, p. 319.

one hundred days.' 'Why,' he plaintively adds, 'were we not born a century later?' The exile at Bombay might well have longed for a period which would bring him news from England in a hundred days. Only a few months afterwards he complains that it is 'seven months from the date of the last London news.' Yet, within fifteen years of this entry in his diary, the first steamer—the 'Enterprise'—completed a voyage from Falmouth to Calcutta.[1] If the birth of Mackintosh had been delayed only a little more than half a century, he would have smiled at the plaintive wish which he recorded in 1811. In that case he would have received an English letter in Bombay, not in a hundred, but in twenty days: he could have received a telegram from England in twenty seconds.

The increased facilities for travelling, which were thus everywhere being introduced, were, in one sense, the consequence, in another sense the cause, of an increased population. The growth of the people, and their greater wealth, supplied every day more persons who were anxious to travel, and means were consequently found to afford them the facilities which they desired. But the great towns, which were everywhere being built in the country, could not have existed, or could not at any rate have been fed, if the old means of locomotion had alone been available. It was almost impracticable to alter the course of a river: but there was no place to which a road could not be brought, there were few places to which a canal could not be led. New centres of population, which, before the time of Brindley and Telford, could not have flourished, rapidly acquired a new prosperity. London, indeed, still retained the old predominance, of which nothing seemed able to deprive it. Thinkers and legislators, philosophers and statesmen, have, in their days, done their best to interfere with the growth of London, but London has grown despite them

London.

[1] Mackintosh, vol. ii. pp. 79, 97. *Ann. Reg.*, 1826, Chron. 66.

CHAP. I.

all. In the seventeenth century the political economists, as they would be termed now, or the political arithmeticians, as they were styled then, were perpetually showing that the growth of London was destroying the whole country, and that the capital was being enriched by causes which were pauperising the provinces. They proved by figures, which seemed incontestable, that, after a certain number of years, the whole population would be concentrated in the metropolis, and that the country would be entirely deserted. Statesmen were easily frightened by the predictions of these dreamers, and by the apparent impossibility of feeding so vast an aggregation of people. The citizens complained that the new houses would reduce the value of the old ones; the country gentlemen complained that they would depopulate the country. Statesmen, citizens, and country gentlemen were agreed that the increase of building was prejudicial—that the head of the nation was growing too big for its body.

The sovereigns of England, after their own fashion, endeavoured to deal with the evil. Nearly 300 years ago Elizabeth actually issued a decree that no addition should be made to the capital. Canute might as well have expected the flowing tide to ebb. James I. attempted to follow his predecessor's example. The fact that a new law seemed necessary might have convinced him that no law would be effectual. James, however, has himself the credit of having made it possible for the citizens to disregard the law. The growth of London could not be checked by either king or parliament, but it might have been arrested by a dearth of water; and in the early days of the seventeenth century London was in serious want of water. The genius of Sir Hugh Myddelton found means for supplying the deficiency: the generous support of the king made the completion of Sir Hugh's work practicable. With a better water supply the city

rapidly increased. A tax was placed on 'new foundations' during the Commonwealth, but the town still grew. St. Giles' was built, in what had previously been fields, in the middle of the century. St. Anne's, Soho, was formed into a new parish in 1685. The inhabitants of the new street which had just been constructed on Lord St. Alban's property, and which had been called 'Jermyn' Street in compliment to the earl, commenced the church of St. James in the same year. Neither the decrees of kings nor the arguments of philosophers were interfering with the constant growth of brick and mortar.[1]

The town, however, still grew, though, compared with its present size, it was small. In the middle of the eighteenth century, Mr. Romilly, the father of the great lawyer, living in the heart of the city, ascribed the death of several of his children to the unwholesomeness of a constant town residence. He accordingly hired some rooms at Marylebone, which was then a small village about a mile distant from town. Twenty-four years afterwards, Romilly himself, while studying for his profession, took chambers in Gray's Inn. 'In the depth of winter,' he wrote to his sister, Madame Roget, 'the moment the sun peeps out I am in the country; a cold country it is; for, having only one row of houses between me and Highgate and Hampstead, a north-west wind blows full against my chambers.' Twenty years later still, Lord Eldon, then chief justice of the Court of Common Pleas, took a house in Gower Street, now one of the most populous portions of central London. 'He used to say that his house there was the pleasantest he ever occupied. He could look over the fields, then open, as far as Hampstead, Highgate, and Islington, and had a garden with

[1] Those who care to follow this subject further may refer to Macaulay's works, vol. i. p. 272. Anderson's *History of Commerce*, vol. ii. 209, pp. 210, 308, 572, 617; Davenant's works; and the curious tract, *The Apology for the Builder*, which Lord Overstone has reprinted in his private collection of Tracts.

CHAP. I.

excellent vegetables, and even peaches.'[1] Though Gower Street was still in the country, the town was growing rapidly. London and its suburbs in 1801 contained only 864,845 persons. In 1811 the population had grown to 1,009,546. It increased from 1811 to 1821 at the rate of 20,000 souls a year. Nor was the increase of its population the most remarkable feature in London. New public buildings, new bridges, new streets, were in course of erection and formation. At the close of the great war only three bridges—London Bridge, Blackfriars, and Westminster—united the north and south banks of the Thames in London. The former of these, encumbered with houses, was at once the most picturesque and inconvenient bridge in Europe. Its narrow roadway afforded insufficient accommodation for the traffic. Its narrow arches impeded the current and navigation of the river. It had taken five centuries to throw three bridges across the river. It hardly took five years to supplement these three bridges with three others—Waterloo, Vauxhall, and Southwark.[2] The first of these still retains its pre-eminence as the finest bridge in London; the second was one of the earliest examples of the use of iron in bridge-making; the third was considered at the time remarkable for the span of its arches. All three of them were opened before the close of 1819.

Nor was it in bridgemaking alone that London was exerting herself. The Custom House was completed in 1817. The new road along the banks of the Thames between Westminster and Vauxhall was projected about the same period. In the midst of the exhausting struggle in the Peninsula a design had been formed for the creation of a new park in Marylebone, and its union by a new broad street with Pall Mall. The scheme received the

[1] Romilly, vol. i. pp. 9 and 139; Twiss' *Eldon*, vol. i. p. 354.
[2] *Ann. Reg.* 1816, pp. 151, 153.

active support of the Regent, who desired that his name should be associated with a liberal encouragement of the fine arts. The Whigs were not ashamed to declare that the Tories purchased the confidence of their prince by supporting his project. It would be well for the morality of public men if no baser charge could be brought against them. The ministers, who promoted the formation of Regent's Park and the construction of Regent Street, deserve the approbation, rather than the reproach, of posterity.

Notwithstanding these improvements, however, locomotion in London was still difficult. In 1815 there were no railways, no tramroads, no steamboats, no omnibuses, no cabs, and only three bridges. Watermen still stood at the different 'stairs' which led from the narrow streets to the river. Only 1,300 hackney coaches were allowed to ply in the streets. The modern police had not superseded the old watch, and gentlemen, who walked in the metropolis, commonly carried arms for their own protection. A beneficent discovery had, indeed, just increased the safety and convenience of London. The existence of an inflammable gas in ordinary coal had for years attracted attention, but it was not till the close of last century that Mr. Murdoch, of Soho, a Cornish engineer, used it to illuminate his own house and offices at Redruth:[1] it was not till 1807 that gas was even experimentally applied to street illumination in Pall Mall. The suggestion that it was practicable to light a city with gas was, in the first instance, received with ridicule. A noble legislator recorded in the House of Lords his formal protest[2] against the first Gas Bill—'because this House, by agreeing to this bill, must encourage the people of this country to embark their fortunes in a speculation in which it appears to me, after the most deliberate consideration of the evi-

[1] *Pict. Hist.*, vol. iv. p. 688; McCulloch's *Com. Dict.*, ad verb. Gas.
[2] Lord Lauderdale, *Protests of the House of Lords*, vol. ii. p. 493.

CHAP. I.

dence given in the committee, no intelligent man can doubt that an adventurer must lose the whole of what he has subscribed, and all that he may, under the authority of this bill, choose to subscribe.' But noble lords were not the only sceptics. A great chemist is said to have sarcastically observed that it was as reasonable to talk of ventilating London with windmills as of lighting it with gas.[1] So useful an invention would, however, have survived a more formidable protest and a more cutting sarcasm. Gas was rapidly introduced into every city. It was incidentally remarked in 1823 that 215 miles of London streets were lighted with gas.[2] The cheapness and brilliancy of the new light led to its almost universal adoption, and the population no longer tolerated the 'darkness visible' to which they had previously been accustomed. It is a singular circumstance that the introduction of gas led to the greater use of oil and candles. 'The greater brilliancy of the streets' made the people 'dissatisfied with the quantum of light previously thought sufficient within their houses.'[3]

Dublin.

It requires, at the present time, an effort of imagination to realise the fact that, at the close of the great war, Dublin was the second town within the limits of the United Kingdom. London contained about 1,100,000 inhabitants; the population of Manchester and Salford could not have comprised 140,000 persons; and no other city in Great Britain was equally populous. In the middle of the eighteenth century, Dublin was estimated by Rutter to contain upwards of 160,000 people; the population, according to Whitelaw, had increased, before the close of the century, to 182,000. But Whitelaw's estimate was probably an exaggeration of the real numbers. In 1821, when the first complete

[1] So at least I have always been told that Sir H. Davy said.
[2] Ann. Reg., 1823, Chron. 59.
[3] Porter's *Progress of the Nation*, p. 590.

census was taken in Ireland, the population of Dublin was found to be 185,881. It will be perhaps safe to assume that its population in 1816 amounted to 180,000 souls.

The situation of Dublin is at once convenient and picturesque. Washed by the Liffey; situated on a convenient bay; at an easy distance from the mother country; Dublin, under favourable circumstances, might have maintained her position among the cities of the empire. Her admirers were willing to contrast the Bay of Dublin with the Bay of Naples; her public buildings might fairly be compared with the edifices of London; a vice-regal court promoted expenditure among her tradesmen; a noble university formed a worthy rival to the two twin institutions at Oxford and Cambridge. Though the dominant race was unwilling to allow the Irish to participate in the political privileges, which were justly their due, there were few material advantages which it was not ready to extend to them. With smaller capabilities at the outset, Belfast is proving now that an Irish town may emulate an English rival. What Belfast is doing now, Dublin might easily have done in 1816.

It will be necessary, later on in this history, to trace the causes which have contributed to the unhappy position of the Irish people. It is sufficient, in the present chapter, to describe the condition of the metropolis of Ireland in 1816. During that very year a step was taken which ought to have insured its future prosperity. Rennie was uniting the north and south of London with the marvellous bridges which he was throwing across the Thames. The same great engineer was actively engaged in extending Dublin harbour. Eight hundred thousand pounds was the estimated cost of the work, and the whole of this vast sum was ultimately expended upon it. Nor did the British Parliament limit its grants to local works of this character. Telford had been instructed to improve the communication between the British and Irish capitals, and

CHAP. I.

was gradually carrying out the great road through Wales, which forms an immortal monument to his skill. Modern inventions were simultaneously shortening the distance between the two cities; and in 1827 a fast coach to Bristol, with a steamer to Dublin, brought the mails from London to Ireland in only thirty-seven hours.[1] But the Irish cared little for harbours, engineering, or steam. Politics, or the agitations, which seemed inseparable from their politics, were their eternal occupation. Disorderly assemblages constantly disturbed the peace of the capital; the small police force, at the disposal of the authorities, was unequal to the task of preserving order. A large body of troops, under the immediate orders of the Lord-Lieutenant, was always stationed in the city; and military authority alone maintained an imperfect and intermittent tranquillity in the streets of Dublin. Perpetual excitement and chronic riots naturally interfered with the prosperity of the town; and Dublin ceased to grow, as the rest of the kingdom was growing, not from any natural defect either of situation or of climate, not from any artificial restraints, imposed upon it by an unenlightened legislature, but from the feverish excitement in which its people passed their lives, and the distrust which its condition generated among the moneyed and the commercial classes.

Manchester.

Macaulay tells us that, at the close of the seventeenth century, Bristol was the second city in Great Britain. There were at the least five cities more populous in 1815. The Mersey and the Clyde were defeating the Severn and the Avon; and Liverpool and Glasgow were rapidly becoming the great ports of the West. Yet Bristol had advantages which might have saved it from its defeat. Gloucestershire and Wales were as rich in mineral wealth as the neighbourhood of Manchester; and the estuary of the Severn was more accessible and less dan-

[1] *Colchester*, vol. iii. p. 209.

gerous than the estuary of the Mersey. Less than 100 years ago, 'the small quantity of Manchester woollens and cottons, manufactured for exportation, was carried on horses' backs to Bewdley and Bridgnorth, on the Severn, from whence' it was 'floated down that river to Bristol, then the chief seaport on the west coast.'[1] The energy of the Duke of Bridgewater, and the genius of Brindley, diverted this trade into a new channel. 'Liverpool,' as Telford wrote in 1799, 'has taken firm root in the country by means of the canals; it is young, vigorous, and well situated. Bristol is sinking in commercial importance; its merchants are rich and indolent, and in their projects they are always too late.'[2]

Since the days of Brindley, Liverpool has succeeded in distancing its great northern rival, and is now the second among the cities of England. Manchester was far the more populous and thriving of the two in 1816. Manchester, at that time, must have contained very nearly 140,000 people; Liverpool did not certainly number more than 120,000 inhabitants. Manchester had, for centuries, been a comparatively thriving town. In 1724 it is said to have contained no less than 2,400 families (about 12,000 souls), and 'their trade was "incredibly large" in tapes, ticking, girth-webb, and fustians. In 1757 the united population of Manchester and Salford was only 20,000.' At that time there was no private carriage in all Manchester. There was no wine merchant nearer than Preston. The roads were so bad that a village twenty miles from the town was more inaccessible than London is now, and in winter food was frequently so scarce that food riots occasionally occurred, resulting in loss of life.[3] The Duke of Bridgewater's energy galvanised this drowsy town into life. His first canal gave the manufacturers cheap coal; his second and greatest

[1] Smiles' *Brindley*, p. 240.
[2] Telford to Mr. Andrew Little, 1799, quoted in Smiles' *Telford*, p. 185.
[3] Smiles' *Brindley*, pp. 158–165.

CHAP. I.

canal gave them an easy outlet for their produce. The genius of Watt supplied them, at the same time, with a new motive power; and Manchester rapidly expanded from the fresh impulse which its trade received. The population of the town, which had amounted in 1774 to 41,032, increased in 1801 to 84,020 or more than doubled in twenty-seven years.

Liverpool.

Liverpool was, at the same time, advancing with nearly equally rapid strides. Chester had undoubtedly been originally considered the chief port of north-western England. But, as time advanced, the estuary of the Dee silted up, or the larger vessels of the day required deeper water. The approach to Chester from the sea became more and more difficult; and an attempt was made, which proved, however, ineffectual, to cut a new and deeper channel. 'The trade of Chester decayed, and that of Liverpool rose upon its ruins.' Three centuries before, 'the people of her Majesty's decayed town of Liverpool' had petitioned Elizabeth to be relieved from a subsidy. In 1634–5, when Charles I. 'made his unconstitutional levy of ship money throughout England, Liverpool was let off with a contribution of 15*l.*, whilst Chester paid 100*l.* and Bristol not less than 1,000*l.*'[1] In 1701 only 102 vessels belonged to Liverpool, and its tonnage was inferior to that of Yarmouth and Exeter, and only just equal to that of Whitby and Scarborough.[2] But its progress was thenceforward rapid; 1,245 vessels entered the port in 1760; 4,746 in 1800; 6,888 in 1816. The population rose, almost as rapidly as that of Manchester—from 79,722 in 1801, to 100,240 in 1811, and to 131,801 in 1821. At the close of the great war therefore Liverpool must have contained about 116,000 people.

The Liverpool of 1816, however, was a very different town to the marvellous city which is now seated on the

[1] Smiles' *Brindley*, p. 186. Haydn, in his *Dictionary of Dates*, says that it was rated for 20*l.* ship money in 1630.

[2] McCulloch's *Commercial Dict.*, 'Ships.'

banks of the Mersey. In 1816, Liverpool did not possess a single steamer. She has now the finest steam fleet in the world. In 1819 the first steamer which had ever crossed the Atlantic—a small vessel of 350 tons' burden—arrived in the Mersey. A day never passes now in which vessels ten times that size do not leave and enter the port, bound to and from the great trans-Atlantic Continent. In 1816 the northern side of the Mersey was amply sufficient for the accommodation of the whole trade of Liverpool; and a group of only four houses marked the site of the future Birkenhead.[1] The trade of Liverpool can no longer be conducted in Liverpool alone; and Birkenhead has, in its turn, grown into a gigantic and busy city. Birkenhead to-day supports as many people as Liverpool contained at the commencement of the century.

Glasgow.

At the present time Glasgow is the second city in the United Kingdom. In 1816 it ranked only as fourth in importance. It was less populous than London, Dublin, and Manchester, but more populous than Liverpool. Glasgow, like Liverpool, owed much to its situation; it owed more to the industry and energy of its inhabitants. Seated on the Clyde, one of the noblest of the rivers of Scotland, it has from the first had a ready access to the western seas. The estuary of the Clyde will carry now the largest vessels in the world. In 1800 it was only five feet deep at high water. Long, however, before that time, Glasgow had grown rapidly in size and prosperity. Originally a cluster of small houses round a venerable cathedral, it owed its chief prosperity to the salmon fisheries of the Clyde. On its incorporation as a borough it placed the figure of a salmon on its shield. The salmon have long been driven from the river; but the fisheries have been replaced by more beneficial industries. The population rose from 4,500 in 1560 to about 12,000 in 1707. But the union opened out to its

[1] Helps' *Life of Brassey*, p. 24; McCulloch's *Commercial Dict.*

CHAP. I.

inhabitants the benefit of the American trade. The thrifty Scotch readily availed themselves of the opportunity, and Glasgow rapidly increased in importance. The broom disappeared from the banks of the Clyde; and the 'Broomielaw' resounded with the noise of an active trade. Glasgow in 1816 may be assumed to have contained from 125,000 to 130,000 people. Nor was the progress of the great northern town undeserved. Glasgow has taken the lead in the greatest improvements of the century; she has concentrated within her limits the various industries of a dozen other cities. It was in Glasgow that James Watt conceived and perfected his marvellous invention. It was in Glasgow that the first steamer, the 'Comet,' was seen in 1812 slowly navigating the Clyde. Manchester is the capital of cotton, Leeds of wool, Birmingham of iron, Newcastle of coal, Macclesfield of silk, Stoke of crockery. But the industries, which have made these great cities properous, all flourish on the banks of the Clyde. Glasgow has wrested from London her iron ship-building; she shares with Liverpool the great American trade. The energy of her children has made her the second town in the United Kingdom.

Edinburgh.

Edinburgh has grown with less rapidity than her western rival. Yet Edinburgh has a charm which Glasgow cannot claim. Vedi Napoli e mori: so the Italian expresses his sense of the rare beauty of the Bay of Naples. But the situation of Edinburgh, if less beautiful, is more romantic than that of Naples. Nothing in Europe is more picturesque than the high rugged rock on which the castle stands. No town view in Europe is more interesting and more sublime than the prospect which is afforded to the pedestrian from the summit of Arthur's Seat. Yet the spectator in 1816 looked on a very different Edinburgh from that which meets the eye of the tourist to-day. Then, indeed, as now, the old castle stood at the one end of the High Street, and Holy-

rood at the other. Then as now the curious could visit the spot on which the Tolbooth stood, or see the house in which Knox dwelt. Then as now the Parliament House, the University, and the princely Library which the latter enjoys, were open to inspection. The Edinburgh of the olden time flourished then in all its picturesque beauty. But the Edinburgh of to-day was in an imperfect condition. Fifty years before, the construction of the North Bridge over the deep ravine which divides the old from the new town, had made the construction of the new town possible. In 1815 one portion of the work had actually been finished. But the Regent Bridge had not connected Calton Hill with the town. Sixteen years were to pass before the completion of Dean Bridge was to lead to the erection of a second new town. The port of Leith, which is now connected with the capital, was separated from it by a wide interval in 1815. CHAP. I.

Yet much of the interest, which clings to Edinburgh to-day, is due to the men with whom its name was associated three-quarters of a century ago. We see the place where Robertson lived, and wrote, and died; where Playfair, Dugald Stewart, and Adam Smith taught; and where Jeffrey and Wilson wrote. The dullest spirit feels his blood stirred when he sees the spot where Scott was born, the school in which he was educated, or the square in which he lived. More tourists have probably gazed on the supposed site of David Deans' humble home than have visited the scene of Rizzio's murder. The genius of romance has added a new charm to the beauties of nature; and the most picturesque of European towns has a fresh interest because it is recognised among all English speaking nations as the birthplace of Sir Walter Scott.

Every one of the towns, which have thus been enumerated, has easy access to the sea. London on the Thames, Dublin on the Liffey, Manchester on the Irwell, Liverpool Birmingham.

CHAP. I.

on the Mersey, Glasgow on the Clyde, Edinburgh in close connection with the great port of Leith and the Firth of Forth—all these places have direct communication with the sea, the great highway both of the ancient and of the modern world. Birmingham does not enjoy any such advantage; it was in 1816 a smaller place than any of those which have been hitherto noticed in this chapter. In 1650 Birmingham is said to have contained only fifteen streets, and 5,472 inhabitants; in 1741 it had fifty-four streets, and 24,660 inhabitants. In 1758 Soho, now one of the busiest parts of the city, was a solitary rabbit warren.[1] But the progress of Birmingham was thenceforward rapid. Its population in 1811 consisted of 85,753 persons; it had risen to 106,000 persons in 1821. Birmingham, therefore, could hardly have contained 100,000 persons at the close of the great war. Yet the situation of the town is not altogether disadvantageous. It is seated in the centre of England. The Rea and the Tame, both in its immediate vicinity, find their way to the Trent and the Severn, the Humber and the Bristol Channel. Neither the Rea nor the Tame were, however, navigable, and Birmingham for generations was therefore dependent on its roads. Only a little more than a century ago (or in 1749), the London stage-coach took three days in going from Birmingham to London. Two different railway companies perform the journey now in as many hours. But signs of improvement were rapidly displaying themselves. Wedgwood had developed Stoke and Etruria. Watt's partner, Boulton, had thrown new life into his native town by the introduction of the steam-engine, and the formation of the Birmingham Canal. Two centuries before, Camden had described the place as full of inhabitants, and resounding with hammers and anvils, for the most part of the smelters. 'In the middle of the eighteenth century, Hutton, on visiting it,

[1] Meteyard's *Wedgwood*, vol. i. p. 241; ii. p. 25.

declared "I had been among dreamers, but now I saw men awake."[1] 'Birmingham,' wrote Telford, fifty years afterwards, 'famous for its buttons and locks, its ignorance and barbarism—its prosperity increases with the corruption of tastes and morals. Its nicknacks, hardware, and gilt gimcracks are proofs of the former; and its locks and bars, and the recent barbarous conduct of its populace, are evidences of the latter.'[2] In 1815, however, only forty-two steam engines were at work in the town; and Birmingham had no town-hall, no public parks, no corporation, and no member. It had been the scene of constant rioting, and prudent persons regarded with disfavour a community which had burned Priestley's library, and had constantly advocated the most extreme political opinions. The full consequences of the discoveries of the previous half-century had not been felt; and Birmingham was only gradually attaining the greatness which it subsequently acquired. Watt, Boulton, and Brindley had laid the foundations of its new prosperity. It was reserved for Stephenson to consummate the work which they had originated.

At the close of the great war there was no other town within the limits of the United Kingdom with 100,000 inhabitants. Bristol, which for centuries had ranked only second to London, had about 80,000 people; Leeds from 70,000 to 80,000; Sheffield from 60,000 to 70,000; and Plymouth and Portsmouth from 50,000 to 60,000. Norwich, which, in the days of Charles II., had been the third town in England, ranked in 1816 as the tenth, and probably contained rather more than 40,000 persons. Grouse flew over the site of Middlesborough; four isolated cottages represented the great town of Birkenhead;[3] Swansea was little more than a village; Merthyr was dumb; Barrow had no furnace, no harbour, no inhabitants.

[1] Smiles' *Boulton and Watt*, p. 162. [2] Smiles' *Telford*, p. 149.
[3] Helps' *Brassey*, p. 24.

CHAP. I

The population had grown rapidly during the latter years of the great war. The best authorities conclude that about 1,000,000 souls were added to England and Wales during the first half of the eighteenth century; according to the same authorities, the population increased by rather less than 2,000,000 from 1750 to 1801. The next twenty years added an increase as large as that which had taken place in the preceding fifty. The greater rapidity, with which the people were multiplying, was due to the extraordinary inventions which had promoted the industries of the nation. But the multiplication of the people would not have been possible without the canals and the roads, which Brindley, Telford, and MacAdam had constructed. The populous towns, which were rising everywhere into importance, could not have prospered, and could not even have been fed, without their assistance. But, if improved roads had facilitated the growth of the great towns, the growth of the great towns had also promoted a quicker and better locomotion. The causes, in fact, acted and reacted on each other. Every new road, every new canal, increased the population. Every addition to the population suggested the formation of some new artery of communication. New canals and new roads were pushed forward, at the commencement of the present century, with the same untiring energy with which railways were made at a later date.

Commerce.

Nor was it within the limits of the United Kingdom alone that communication was becoming easier and more frequent. Twenty years of war had seriously injured the commerce of every continental nation; but twenty years of war had not arrested the progress of our own. England undoubtedly enjoys peculiar advantages for prosecuting an advantageous foreign commerce. Fortunate in her situation, happy in her climate, rich in her mineral wealth, she has been thrust by nature into the Atlantic,

the medium of communication between the New World and the Old. But the advantages, which the United Kingdom thus undoubtedly enjoys, are, it must be remembered, shared by other nations. Spain, with her ample seaboard, her admirable position, her great rivers, and her fertile resources, was at least as capable as this country of ultimately becoming the great emporium of the world. Spain, too, three centuries ago, occupied in the commonwealth of nations the position which Great Britain has since attained. Spanish enterprise had won for Spain, as British enterprise has since acquired for England, a world-wide dominion. It was the Spaniard's boast then, as it is the Briton's now, that the sun never set on the dominions of his sovereign. The ships of Spain penetrated to every country and to every sea; the wealth of Spain excited the envy of Europe. Her children had proved themselves the most enterprising, the most warlike, the most adventurous people in the world.

The commercial supremacy of England rose on the ruins of Spanish commerce. Religious intolerance, promoting persecution and civil war, paved the way for the fall of Spain. A religious reformation, encouraging free thought and free enterprise, paved the way for the rise of England. The Mersey, with its dangerous sandbanks, the Clyde, with only five feet of water, became, in the hands of a free and enterprising people, two of the greatest ports in the world; and England prospered, not from any natural advantages which it possessed over other nations, but from the spirit and perseverance which a people, free to think and free to act, are certain to display.

The English mercantile marine 'first became considerable in the reign of Elizabeth; and gradually increased under her successors James I. and Charles I.' At the time of the Restoration 95,266 tons of British shipping annually 'cleared' our ports. Thirty years even of Stuart government doubled the amount; and 190,533

CHAP. I.

tons of British shipping cleared outwards at the time of the Revolution of 1688. At the commencement of the eighteenth century 3,281 vessels, measuring 261,222 tons, and manned by 27,196 men and boys, comprised the entire mercantile marine of England and Wales. In 1816, 9,744 vessels, representing a capacity of 1,415,723 tons, and manned by 90,119 men, and belonging to British and Irish shipmasters, entered the ports of the United Kingdom. The number of vessels had been trebled in a little more than a century. Their carrying capacity had been increased six-fold.[1] The increase had been great, but it was to become much greater. In 116 years the tonnage of British vessels entering our ports had risen from 261,222 to 1,415,723 tons, or had increased five-fold. In the next fifty-eight years the tonnage rose from 1,415,723 to 12,751,128 tons, or increased nine-fold. The increase in the fifty-eight years has been ten times as great as that in the previous 116 years.[2] Improvements in the art of navigation had been encouraged by the development of the mercantile marine. 'In the last thirty years,' wrote Mackintosh, in 1811, 'chronometers, lunar observations, and copper bottoms have been brought into general use. If three improvements of equal magnitude be made every thirty years, what will be the state of the art of navigation in three centuries?'[3]

The vast additions, which had been made to the mercantile marine of Britain, were attributable to the development of its carrying trade. The carrying trade had grown from the closer intercourse which the British were gradually establishing with every part of the globe. The causes which, in the first instance, might have been expected to have interfered with its growth, had encou-

[1] McCulloch's *Commercial Dict.*, ad verb. Ships.

[2] The tonnage, entering and cleared from English ports, is, of course, totally different to the tonnage belonging to them. The reader who cares for further information on the subject will find it in Porter's *Progress of the Nation*, p. 402.

[3] Mackintosh, vol. ii. p. 171.

raged its development. From 1701 to 1816 England had been almost incessantly at war. But the fortunes of war had opened vast empires to our traders, and the superiority, which our fleets had acquired over their adversaries, had driven many rival flags from the seas. In 1816 England had dependencies in every portion of the globe, and dictated the terms on which the commerce of the world should be conducted. The Seven Years War had given Britain possession of India and Canada, Dominica, Granada, St. Vincent, and Tobago: Jamaica had been taken in 1655, Gibraltar in 1704, Ceylon in 1796, Malta in 1800, the Mauritius, St. Helena, and the Cape in 1806. Antigua, Barbadoes, Montserrat, Nevis, St. Kitts, the Bahamas, the Bermudas, and Anguilla, had been occupied by British settlers in various periods of the seventeenth century; St. Lucia, Trinidad, Demerara, and Essequibo, had been captured by us during the great war which concluded in 1815. The foundations of the vast Australasian empire had been laid by the settlement of New South Wales in 1787, and of Van Diemen's Land in 1803, while the allies at Vienna had entrusted to our safe custody the Ionian Islands in the Mediterranean, and Heligoland in the North Sea.

Gibraltar.

From a strategical point of view, Gibraltar, Malta, and the Cape are the most important of these possessions. Ever since Gibraltar had been taken by Rooke in 1704, it had proved an impregnable fortress. It was in vain that the Spanish and French had endeavoured to wrest it from its victors within a few months after its original capture. It was in vain that the Spaniards renewed the attack in 1720 and 1727. It was in vain that, again in conjunction with the French, they brought against its diminutive garrison in 1779 the largest armament that had ever been arrayed against a single fortress. Elliot, in 1779, shed a new lustre on Rooke's achievement, and

CHAP. I.

Gibraltar since then has remained in the undisputed possession of its British conquerors.

Malta.

The narrow strait, which the rock at Gibraltar partially commands, affords its possessors invariable access to the Mediterranean. The island of Malta offers the requisite shelter to the fleets of any nation navigating the great inland sea. Nearly three centuries and a half have passed since the Knights Hospitallers of St. John, driven by the Turks from their pleasant home in Rhodes, retired to the barren rock of Malta, which Charles the Great placed at their disposal. More than three centuries have passed since Solyman the Magnificent exhausted the resources of the Ottoman empire in a fruitless attempt to drive La Valette and his scanty band of followers from their crumbling defences. The town of Valetta commemorates now the prowess of La Valette, and the signal discomfiture of his assailants. The knights of Malta had defended an hastily fortified position against the flower of the Ottoman chivalry. The standard of England floats now over the most impregnable fortifications in the world.

For 233 years after the repulse of the Turks, the Knights Hospitallers of St. John retained possession of the rock of Malta. But the knights of 1798 were animated by a different spirit from that of La Valette and his heroic companions. Treachery opened doors which no strength could have readily forced, and Malta yielded to Napoleon towards the close of the century. A barren island in the middle of the Mediterranean could not, however, be held by a nation whose fleets were driven off the seas. The battle of the Nile decided the fate of Malta, and the English reduced the island soon afterwards by blockade. It is remarkable that its new victors failed at first to recognise the importance of their acquisition, and that they consented, at the peace of Amiens, to restore it, on conditions, to its old owners, the Knights Hospitallers of St. John. But the intrigues of Buonaparte in Egypt

convinced even Addington of the great importance of this new possession. The British Government declined to evacuate the island, though they adopted expedients for its retention, which it is difficult to read without a sense of shame. The venal process, by which Lord Whitworth and Lord Liverpool apparently hoped to avert the necessity of war, was however abandoned; and the possession of Malta became the immediate cause of the great war, which was only finally concluded on the field of Waterloo.[1]

The Cape of Good Hope.

The opening of an overland route to India has diminished the strategical importance of the Cape of Good Hope. The tedious journey round the continent of Africa has been superseded by the overland route. M. de Lesseps has united the waters of the Mediterranean with those of the Red Sea. Engineers are seriously contemplating the possibility of reaching India by an Asian railway, and of thus reverting to the original route of Alexander the Great. It requires, under such circumstances, an effort of the imagination to realise the period when men were anxiously debating the possibility of reaching India by sea. Yet this anxiety undoubtedly led to the greatest discoveries which the world has ever known. It was with this object that, nearly four centuries ago, Bartholomew de Diaz sailed down the western coast of Africa, and penetrated to the Indian Sea. It was with this object that Vasco de Gama, some years afterwards, followed up the discoveries of his adventurous predecessor, and ultimately reached the shores of India itself. It was with this object that Columbus embarked on his memorable expedition: and, boldly seeking the eastern shores of the known world through an unknown ocean, was rewarded by the discovery of a new world.

[1] The account of Lord Whitworth's attempt to retain Malta by bribing Napoleon's family will be found in Yonge's *Life of Lord Liverpool*, vol. i. pp. 107–116.

CHAP. I.

richer and more important than that for which he was bound. Nothing is, indeed, more marvellous than that, only four centuries ago, the shape of Africa and the existence of America should have been absolutely unknown. There is, at least, a strong presumption that the Norwegians, 500 years before Columbus, had penetrated to Northern America.[1] Most commentators think that, twenty-one centuries before Bartholomew de Diaz, an Egyptian expedition, organised by Neco, circumnavigated Africa. The very cause which made the credulous historian, for once, incredulous—the navigators' statement that in sailing round Libya they had the sun upon their right hand—is the strongest proof of the truth of the story.[2] But the discoveries of Neco, and the enterprise of the Norwegians, led to no practical results. The existence of a new world beyond the confines of the Western Ocean was ignored; the possibility of reaching India round the coast of Africa was forgotten. Portugal was to have the credit of accomplishing one discovery, Spain was to organise the expedition which was to result in the other.

The pecuniary gain to Europe, which resulted from the discovery of the Cape of Good Hope, was enormous. Mun, in a tract published in 1621, estimated that pepper which was worth 2½*d.* a lb. in India, was worth 2*s.* at Aleppo; that cloves worth 9*d.* a lb. in India, were worth 4*s.* 9*d.* in Aleppo; that the difference between the price of mace in these two places was 8*d.* and 4*s.* 9*d.*; of nutmegs 4*d.* and 2*s.* 4*d.*; of indigo 1*s.* 2*d.* and 4*s.* 4*d.*; and of raw silk, 8*s.* and 12*s.* So largely did the constant change of conveyance in the overland route enhance the value of each article.[3] The Portuguese, who had discovered the Cape, monopolised, in the first in-

[1] See the arguments concisely stated in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, ad verb. America.

[2] Herodotus, book iv. c. 42; and Rawlinson's *Herodotus*, vol. iii. p. 28 note.

[3] McCulloch's *Commercial Dictionary*, 'East India Company.'

stance, the advantages of the discovery. They persuaded the Pope to grant them a Bull, which gave them an exclusive right for ever to all the discoveries which they had either made or might make in the Indian Seas. Incredible as it may seem now, the mere issue of this Bull secured them a practical monopoly of the Indian trade for upwards of a century. But the cruelties of Philip of Spain taught another nation to question the power which the Pope had thus presumptuously claimed. The Dutch, the most enterprising sailors of the seventeenth century, raised their flag in the Indian Seas, and planted the colony of Cape Town in 1650. For a century and a half the settlement remained in their possession. In the great revolutionary war, however, it fell, as all the settlements of her enemies fell, into the hands of England: and, though it was surrendered to its old masters at the peace of Amiens, it was retaken in 1806, and has ever since remained in British hands. The possession of the Cape is undoubtedly still of great advantage to any nation with a large Indian trade. Neither the adoption of the overland route nor the opening of the Suez Canal has diverted the heavier traffic from its original course. A station at the Cape, where ships can ride, and obtain either water or supplies, is of importance to its possessors.

The Australasian provinces in the one hemisphere, and Canada in the other, promise now to have the greatest future before them of any English speaking colonies. In 1816, however, Canada contained only a population of 333,250 souls: while, including convicts and free settlers, there were not 30,000 British persons in the whole of Australia. The West Indies and the East Indies were, at that time, the most important dependencies of England. The West Indies were then both relatively and actually of much more importance to this country than they are now. The value of the entire

CHAP. I.

British and Irish produce, exported in 1815, amounted to 49,653,245*l.*; and 7,218,057*l.*, or more than one-seventh of these productions, were taken by the British West Indies.[1] The value of the British and Irish exports had risen in 1873 to 255,164,603*l.*, and only 3,154,337*l.* of this amount were sent to the West Indian Islands. The trade of the country had increased five-fold, but the trade of the West Indies had been reduced to one-half its previous proportions. There can, unhappily, be very little doubt as to the causes which produced the rise and fall of the West Indian Islands. Jamaica, the most important of these possessions, made little progress till the negroes of Hayti, animated by the tidings of the distant revolution in France, threw over their allegiance to their white masters. The trade of Hayti was destroyed by the rebellion of the blacks; and the trade of Jamaica rose on its ruins. In 1772 Jamaica had only exported 11,000 hogsheads of sugar. Her exports in the six years succeeding 1793 rose to 83,000 hogsheads, and in 1801 and 1802 to 143,000 hogsheads a year.[2] The other islands shared the advantage which Jamaica had thus gained from the Hayti rebellion.

Slavery.

The prosperity of the West India Islands rested, however, on an unfortunate basis. The vast majority of the population existed in a state of enforced servitude; and a small minority of whites had absolute disposal of the persons and the labour of their black servants. From the time of Elizabeth to the days of George III., a regular trade in slaves was actively conducted between Africa and the West Indies. Three hundred thousand slaves were exported from Africa during the last twenty years of the seventeenth century. Six hundred and ten thousand Africans were imported into Jamaica alone during the first eighty-six years of the eighteenth cen-

[1] McCulloch's *Commercial Dict.*, under Importation and Exportation, and Colonies and Colony Trade. [2] Ibid.

tury. The horrible traffic was openly defended on plausible grounds. Slavery, it was said with truth, had always existed in Africa; the slave was, at least, as well off under a white master in the West Indies, as under a black master on his own continent. The produce of the West Indies, moreover, had beyond all question added to the comforts and conveniences of the civilised world; and the climate of the West Indies made the cultivation of the soil impracticable without the employment of compulsory negro labour. The white man could not work and live in a tropical swamp: the black man would not work if he were not compelled to do so. No one denied that slavery was disfigured by the perpetration of many cruelties; or that the slave, in his passage from Africa, was occasionally subjected to cruel tortures. But these evils, it was asserted, were not irremediable. The traffic might be conducted in a humane manner; the slave owner might be compelled to treat his slaves humanely. A slave, in the West Indies, the property of a humane master, was at least as well off as a negro in Africa.[1] CHAP.

These were the excuses, by which the continuance of the slave trade was justified. But the real reason for continuing it was probably different. Men might agree or disagree as to the advantages or disadvantages of the traffic; but no reasonable man could doubt that the slaves represented a very considerable property. In 1833, when slavery was finally abolished in the British dominions, it was found that there were no fewer than 780,000 slaves; and it was estimated that the value of these slaves amounted to 45,000,000*l.* It was one thing for even a humane politician to regret the existence of an indefensible and even horrible trade: it was another to contemplate the destruction of 45,000,000*l.* of property.

[1] McCulloch's *Commercial Dict.*, 'Slaves and Slave Trade;' Porter's *Progress of the Nation*, p. 809.

CHAP. I.

Half a century of agitation was, in fact, barely sufficient to accomplish the reform. The successive steps, by which the slave trade was abolished, and slavery was destroyed, form some of the most striking features in English history. In 1783 or 1784 a Mr. Ramsay published a remarkable book on the cruelties of the slave trade. Ramsay had been a surgeon on board a man-of-war commanded by Sir Charles Middleton. He had settled at St. Kitts, and had, therefore, a considerable acquaintance with the subject of slavery. Returning home, and taking holy orders, his mind had brooded on the cruelties which he had witnessed; and his book was the consequence. The book made some sensation: but the sensation would probably have soon subsided, if Lady Middleton had not suggested that the subject should be brought before Parliament. Sir Charles, to whom Lady Middleton naturally appealed, replied that he was no speaker; and it consequently became necessary to seek elsewhere for some assistance. There had lately been elected for the thriving borough of Hull a young man endowed with ability of the very highest order; eloquent beyond almost all his other contemporaries, and animated with a singular zeal for everything that might advance the honour of his God, or promote the welfare of the human family.

Wilberforce.

William Wilberforce was born on August 24, 1759; the son of affluent parents, he enjoyed the advantage of a considerable fortune. At twenty years of age he was elected at the cost of 8,000*l.* or 9,000*l.* for Hull. At the same time he formed a firm and warm friendship for Pitt. In 1783 Pitt, Eliot, and he together made a tour in France; and the incidents of the tour undoubtedly cemented the friendship of the three friends. Soon after their return to England, the marvellous events occurred, which led to the overthrow of the Coalition ministry, and the accession of Pitt to power. After one of the most extraordinary sessions in its history, Parliament was dissolved; and Pitt

boldly appealed to the country to support him in the crisis. The great county of York was at that time the largest and most important constituency in England; and the interest of the Fitzwilliams and the Cavendishes made it a Whig stronghold. It seemed doubtful whether the Tories could even venture to contest the representation with the great Whig lords. The Yorkshire clothiers, however, were desirous of fighting. A large meeting of freeholders assembled at York; and Wilberforce, as a Yorkshireman and member of Parliament, attended the meeting. Resolutions, condemning the Coalition ministry, were proposed by the chief Tory magnates. Speeches, on the other side, were delivered by the great Whig lords and their adherents. The day wore on; the weather was untoward; the audience were weary when Wilberforce mounted the table. The effect of the speech which he then made has probably never been exceeded. 'I saw,' said one who was present, 'a mere shrimp mount upon the table; but, as I listened, he grew and grew, until the shrimp became a whale.' 'The honest, independent freeholders of that great county,' wrote the 'Public Advertiser,' 'looked the Duke of Devonshire, Lord John Cavendish, the Earls of Carlisle and Fitzwilliam in the face; and against that mighty aristocracy voted a loyal address to their sovereign.' 'We'll have this man for our county member,' was their unanimous roar.

The freeholders were as good as their word. Wilberforce was elected for Yorkshire. The bosom friend of the minister, the representative of the largest English constituency, gifted with extraordinary eloquence, the highest situations in the public service seemed to lie within his grasp. After the session was over he took a tour on the Continent: his companion in his tour was Milner, the younger brother of his first schoolmaster. Milner was a low churchman, seriously inclined, and frequently turned

CHAP. I.

the conversation to religious subjects. Wilberforce was impressed with his friend's earnestness, and, though he had apparently led a very harmless life, was convinced of his own worthlessness. The whole object of his career was changed. He abandoned all the ambitious plans which he had previously formed, and devoted himself to the cause of Christianity and the reformation of society. His friends whispered that he was mad; but, though Wilberforce was singular in his opinions, there was nothing eccentric in them. 'If this is madness,' said one of his mother's friends, 'I hope he will bite us all.'

Such was the man to whom Sir Charles and Lady Middleton appealed to bring the question of the slave trade before Parliament. A committee was formed in London, under the presidency of Granville Sharpe, to raise funds and obtain information for the campaign. Sharpe was an admirable leader in such a cause. He had been the man who had obtained the first decision in 1772 under which slavery had been declared illegal in England. The London committee decided on collecting evidence to justify their appeal to Parliament; and they employed for this purpose a young man who had lately left the University, Thomas Clarkson. Clarkson, two years previously, had gained a prize at Cambridge for an essay on the slave trade. He proved a very zealous, though not always a very discreet agent, and succeeded in obtaining much valuable information. Armed with Clarkson's facts, Wilberforce prepared to bring the question before the House. The moment seemed ripe for the change. Pitt threw himself with warmth into his friend's cause; Fox agreed with Pitt in desiring abolition; Burke was its declared advocate; the majority both of the House and of the nation seemed in favour of the proposal. A bill regulating the number of slaves to be carried by each ship (one slave to each ton) received the royal assent in 1788. A motion for the complete aboli-

tion of the trade from January 1, 1796, was carried in 1792, and everything seemed consequently to point to the early accomplishment of Wilberforce's hopes. Unfortunately for the success of the great cause the French Revolution broke out. The blacks in St. Domingo revolted against their masters. Commotions were apprehended in the West India islands. The cause of the slaves became associated in men's minds with the excesses of Jacobinism; and the opponents to abolition gathered fresh hopes from the excitement which was everywhere visible. The House of Commons refused to confirm its vote for gradual abolition. A new Parliament adopted the device of leaving the colonies to deal with the measure themselves. The British trade in slaves to foreign colonies was not suppressed till 1805. The British slave trade was not finally abolished till the commencement of 1807.

Throughout these years of disappointment and reverse Wilberforce steadily persevered in the cause which had become the business of his life. Rarely had the House ever witnessed such enthusiasm as it displayed when his bill finally passed in 1807. Romilly, one of the most virtuous of its members, urged the House to reflect how much the rewards of virtue exceeded those of ambition; and, when he proceeded to contrast the feelings of the Emperor of the French in all his greatness with those of that honoured individual who would this 'day lay his head upon his pillow and remember that the slave trade was no more, the whole house, surprised into a forgetfulness of its ordinary habits, burst forth into acclamations of applause.' Wilberforce, however, never rested after his great triumph. He had obtained the abolition of the British slave trade. During the next ten years he was continually urging other nations to follow the example of this country. In Europe, France, Denmark, Sweden, Holland; in North America, the United States; in South America, Venezuela, Buenos Ayres, and Chili, all agreed,

CHAP. I.

on the remonstrance of this country, to abolish the traffic in slaves.[1]

As a result of these exertions the trade in slaves, which had disgraced the world since the days of Elizabeth, was greatly checked. Slavery still continued to exist in the colonies of the British empire. The West Indies still continued to send slave-grown sugar to Europe. But the colonists were compelled to depend for their supply of labourers on negroes born in the colonies, and were no longer able to supplement their own supplies with importations from Africa. Two consequences, each beneficial to the cause of humanity, ensued. The cruelties of the middle passage were terminated. The slave himself became a more valuable article, and consequently was likely to obtain more lenient treatment than he had previously received. But the abolition of the traffic in slaves was doubly gratifying to the humanitarian because it pointed to the abolition, at no distant date, of slavery itself. Wilberforce had retired from public life long before this great end was accomplished. But he had the satisfaction of learning on his death-bed in 1833 that the labours of his life had been rewarded by a full success. The Parliament, which ultimately gave effect to his policy, testified its admiration of his earlier exertions by following him to the grave; and by placing in Westminster, among the great worthies of his country and of his generation, all that remained of the orator, the philanthropist, and the Christian.

East Indies.

The West Indies had gained their name from the object which Columbus had had in view in his first voyage. He had been seeking for the Indies of the East, and had found a new and richer Indies in the West. The English acquired a permanent footing in the New World before they succeeded in establishing themselves in India. For a whole century after the discovery of the Cape,

1 Wilberforce, vol. i. pp. 54, 56, 58, 119, 144, 152, 166, 173; ii. 196.

the Portuguese monopolised the Indian trade. The Pope's Bull saved them from the competition of any rival. During the sixteenth century, indeed, the sea captains of England made many attempts to secure for themselves some share of this trade. But they endeavoured to find a new route to India through the ice-bound seas in the North Pole. The dangers of the Arctic circle were smaller obstacles to these bold men than the impotent thunders of a powerless old bishop enthroned in a decaying city. The progress of the Reformation, however, placed a new interpretation on the thunders of the Church. Stephens, Drake, Cavendish, and Borroughs successively penetrated the Indian Seas, and carried the best carracks of Portugal into an English port. Their hardihood produced many imitators. At the close of the sixteenth century a Company was established in London with the exclusive right to trade to India. But the progress of the Company was slow. Dutch and English, French and Portuguese, all contended for the great Indian trade. Exposed to jealousy at home, and hostility in the East, the Company displayed slight symptoms of its future fortunes.

In the meanwhile, however, events were in progress, which were paving the way for the ultimate supremacy of an European power in India. Towards the close of the fourteenth century the Mogul Tartars, under the conduct of Tamerlane, had swept like a destroying wave over the whole of Hindostan. A century afterwards the Sultan Baber completed what Tamerlane had begun, and founded what is usually known as the Mogul empire. The empire enjoyed two centuries of predominance. Prosperity, however, led to indolence; indolence to carelessness. Kouli Khan, Shah of Persia, invaded India in 1739, and gained an easy victory over Tamerlane's effeminate successor. The victory of the Persians led to the disruption of the great Mogul empire. The soubahdars, or officers of the empire, threw off their

CHAP. I.

allegiance; and, struggling for their own independence, courted the assistance of the European strangers. The disintegration of the Mogul empire was facilitating the rise of a new power. It was still uncertain where the nation would be found, whose subjects should succeed in rivalling the exploits of Tamerlane.

Four European nations enjoyed, at the time, the advantage of a foothold on Indian soil. The Portuguese retained possession of Calicut and other places, though their power was on the decline. The Dutch conducted a profitable trade with their settlements on the shores of India, and with the islands in the Eastern Seas. The French had established a formidable position at Pondicherry. The English had formed a Presidency at Madras; they had purchased Calcutta; and they had obtained Bombay from Portugal as the dowry of Charles II.'s queen. Though, however, they already possessed the three towns, which were ultimately to become the seats of their government, their power was certainly not superior to that of the French. Twice in the middle of the eighteenth century they attempted to take the position which the French had established at Pondicherry, and twice they were foiled. But the French were not the only enemies in India before whom the British had occasionally to retreat. Only 120 years ago Surajah Dowlah overthrew the English settlement at Calcutta, and subjected every inch of Bengal to native rule. Lawrence and Clive repaired our fortunes in Madras, and gave to England the predominance in that Presidency which she has never lost. The genius of Clive avenged our misfortunes in Bengal, and wrought a fearful retribution on Surajah Dowlah. Clive's victory at Plassey gained for the East India Company a richer empire than Wolfe, two years afterwards, won for the crown at Quebec.

The career of conquest, which Clive thus commenced, was actively prosecuted by his successors, Warren

Hastings, Lord Cornwallis, and Lord Wellesley. The Company gradually extended its dominion over the greater part of Hindostan. But their trade and their profits did not advance with their conquests. Their servants, indeed, continually returned home with large fortunes; but the shareholders were compelled to satisfy themselves with low dividends. The abuses, which the administration of the Company permitted, attracted the attention of politicians to the anomalous character of their empire. Statesmen of all parties were satisfied that a Company, formed only for trading purposes, could not be allowed to exercise an independent and uncontrolled dominion over a vast and populous empire. The Coalition ministry formed in 1783 endeavoured to transfer the whole government of India to commissioners to be appointed by the crown. The India Bill proved fatal to the Coalition ministry. Pitt, taking advantage of the experience of his opponents, succeeded with a milder proposal, and instituted a Board of Control. The scheme left the Company in the enjoyment of an exclusive trade: it continued to them the absolute regulation of all commercial matters. It merely permitted a board, consisting of six members of the Privy Council, 'to check, superintend, and control all acts, operations, and concerns, which in any wise relate to the civil or military government or revenues of the territories and possessions of the East India Company.'[1]

For nearly thirty years after the passage of Pitt's India Bill, the East India Company still retained the exclusive privilege of trading to India. It was not till 1814 that the monopoly of the Company was partially terminated, and that the Indian trade was, on certain conditions, thrown open to all British subjects. The Company in vain endeavoured to resist a change, which practically terminated the injurious monopoly which they

[1] McCulloch's *Commercial Dict.*; Porter's *Progress of the Nation*; Capper's *Three Presidencies of India.*

CHAP. I.

had enjoyed for more than two centuries. They in vain endeavoured to prove that the habits and the poverty of the native Indians made it impossible to hope for any increase in the Indian trade. It was in vain that they obtained the evidence of the greatest authorities on Indian questions: that Warren Hastings emerged from the retirement, in which he had passed the twenty preceding years of his life, to deny that 'our export trade would be greatly furthered by opening the traffic with India to all who might desire to embark in it;' and that Sir John Malcolm was brought forward to declare that 'the general population of India were not likely to become customers for European articles because they did not possess the means to purchase them.'[1] Parliament had the wisdom to refuse to listen to the claims of the Company, or to be guided by the advice of Indian officials. The result showed the wisdom of their decision, and the salutary effects of free trade. The trade with India was at once rapidly expanded. 'The value of the merchandise exported from Great Britain to India, which amounted in 1814 to 870,177*l.*, amounted in 1819 to 3,052,741*l.*'[2] The destruction of the Company's monopoly and the beneficial influence of free trade in other words increased our trade fourfold. Extended relations were in their turn to promote still further additions to our commerce, and to draw still closer the bonds of union between the mother country and her eastern dependency.

At the close of the great war, then, Britain had possessions in every portion of the world; but the importance of the dependencies, which she had won, had hardly reconciled her to the loss of the magnificent colony, which she had had the misfortune to lose. In

[1] Quoted in Yonge's *Life of Lord Liverpool*, pp. 462 and 465.

[2] House of Lords Committee, 1821, quoted by McCulloch on East India Company.

1765, or fifty years before the date at which this history opens, a foolish Parliament, under the guidance of an obstinate minister, had passed the famous Act which drove America into revolt, and ultimately deprived this country of her noblest colony. A little more than thirty years before the date at which this history opens the treaty had been signed which had recognised the independence of the American Republic. Men had hardly ceased to regret that the generation which had won Canada in one hemisphere, and India in the other, for the crown of England, had permitted a country, greater either than India or Canada, to be separated from the British empire. The victories of Clive and Wolfe had shed a new lustre on the shield of England, but its brightness had been obscured by the capitulations of Burgoyne and Cornwallis. England has long forgotten the lamentations of such patriots as these. Every wise Englishman, indeed, still laments the causes which drove America into revolt; but no wise man regrets that she should have won her independence. The United States, since their separation from the mother country, have increased in wealth, in population, and in resources, and the British have the satisfaction of knowing that the great transatlantic republic, whose prosperity is almost equal to their own, speak the same language, read the same literature, and claim the same origin as themselves.

Thirteen provinces revolted from their allegiance to the British crown in 1776; and the thirteen stripes and thirteen stars, which the United States still place on their flag, will commemorate the revolt for ever. The thirteen States had in 1776 a free population of 2,600,000 persons. Between 1776 and 1815, however, six more States had been added to the Union, and the free population of the Republic had increased to 7,000,000. The trade of our former colony was rivalling that of our

CHAP. I.

own,[1] and the British shipmasters loudly complained that the Americans were depriving them of their business. Nor was it surprising that the mercantile marine of the United States should acquire importance amidst the exceptional circumstances under which the eighteenth century had closed and the nineteenth century had opened. Every other great nation was at war, and the country which alone enjoyed the blessings of peace obtained complete immunity for her traders. Neutrality, however, is a condition which it is difficult for either a nation or an individual to maintain. A man rarely possesses the affection of two friends who have quarelled with one another, and, if he attempt to hold the scales evenly between them, he is proverbially liable to lose the friendship of both. So is it with nations. When States are engaged in all the difficulties of a close contest they are apt to regard with suspicion the attitude of an ally who regards the cause of their antagonists as favourably as their own. The suspicion too often ripens into hostility, and the neutral finds it necessary to draw the sword, in a quarrel which is not his own, for the sake of maintaining his own independence.

During the earlier years of the great revolutionary war, the neutrality of the United States was not seriously affected. The Americans gained, in some respects, from the dissensions of European nations, and their merchants obtained a large addition to their carrying trade. Towards the close of 1806, however, the progress of the war had altered the conditions on which it had previously been conducted. Trafalgar had made Great Britain mistress of the seas; Austerlitz and Jena had made Napoleon master of the Continent. For fourteen years the two great rivals had been almost incessantly engaged in strife, and one had obtained virtual predomi-

[1] Compare the tables in Porter's *Progress*, pp. 357 and 418, and see also remarks on p. 399.

nance on the land, the other on the ocean. Napoleon saw clearly that the resources, which had enabled Great Britain to carry on the contest, depended on her trade, and that the destruction of her commerce would lead to the immediate collapse of his adversary. How, however, was the commerce of a nation to be destroyed by a ruler who had hardly a ship of war at his disposal? The arrogance of Buonaparte suggested an answer to the question. In his famous Berlin decree, at the end of 1806, he had the presumption to declare all the ports of Great Britain in a state of blockade, and to forbid the importation, into any port under his control, of the productions of either Great Britain or of her colonies. The British Government retaliated by declaring all the ports, either of France or of her allies, or from which the British flag was excluded, in an actual state of blockade, and by condemning all vessels trading to them as good and lawful prize; unless they had previously touched at a British port, and paid customs duties to the British crown. Napoleon, by the Milan decree, endeavoured to make this condition nugatory by declaring any neutral vessel, which had paid tax to the British Government, denationalised. The claims of the belligerents had thus virtually destroyed the carrying trade of America; and America avenged herself for the loss from which she was suffering by closing her ports against the flags of the rival nations.

The state of things, which had thus arisen, was very memorable. The two chief belligerents had forbidden all neutral trade with their opponents. The chief neutral had excluded herself from all intercourse with the belligerents. Modern history does not perhaps contain any equally unfortunate record of the results of warfare. There was, however, a wide distinction between the decrees, which Napoleon had issued, and the orders with which the British Government had replied to them. Napoleon, powerless on the ocean, was incapable of

CHAP. I.

enforcing his own commands; while Britain, as mistress of the seas, was able to carry out the decisions of her ministers. The British orders, which were enforced, became consequently much more offensive to the Americans than the French decrees, which were practically unexecuted; and the Government of the United States displayed an increasing readiness to quarrel with this country. It is not necessary to narrate here the progress of the long diplomatic struggle which preceded the war of 1812; it is not possible to describe the varied results of a struggle, in which both parties achieved some successes and sustained some reverses; it is not requisite to detail the stipulations of the peace, with which hostilities were ultimately concluded at the close of 1814. These things properly refer to the history of a previous period. It is unnecessary, therefore, to relate them in these pages.

Britain, then, at the period at which this history opens, had just concluded a war with the greatest power on the Continent, and with the greatest power in the New World. The perseverance of her statesmen, the determination of her people, the genius of her commanders, the indomitable bravery of her troops, had made her the foremost nation in the world. Twenty years of almost continuous warfare had extended her empire; and had arrested neither the increase of her population, nor the growth of her trade. While the thoughts of statesmen were occupied with the changing aspects of a protracted war, Watt was completing his steam engine, Arkwright his water frame, Crompton his mule, Cartwright his power-loom, Davy his safety lamp; Telford was carrying roads through the most impenetrable parts of the country; Murdoch was turning night into day by the invention of gas; Bell was launching the first British steamer, the 'Comet,' on the Clyde; Rennie was throwing new and beautiful bridges across the Thames. Merchants and manufacturers were alike profiting from the inventions

of these great men, and England was proving by her example that a free people could triumph over the greatest difficulties, and prosper in a state of war which apparently made all prosperity hopeless.

There was indeed another side to the picture; 'a reverse to the medal.' Material progress was accompanied with political retrogression, and victory was purchased at a cost faintly appreciated at the time, but to be discovered on the morrow. The condition of the English people, the political disabilities which they endured, the laws, to which they were subjected, cannot be considered in this chapter. It is sufficient to have recorded here the advance which Britain had made in material prosperity. Later on it will be the duty of the historian to record the circumstances of individual Englishmen in 1816, and to describe the victories which progress gradually achieved over the selfish policy of an unreformed legislature.

CHAPTER II.

CHAP. II.

Effects of travelling on political life in England.

THERE is at the present time no town in either England or Wales which a man cannot reach in a twelve hours' journey from London. He may be whirled from the metropolis to York or from York to the metropolis in four hours. Two hundred years ago, a gentleman would have thought himself fortunate if he had been able to reach London from Northumberland in a week. A coach in 1706 undertook with the blessing of God to convey persons from London to York in four days. The facilities which roads and railways have afforded to travellers have undoubtedly changed the face of England; they have indirectly led to an alteration in the composition of the House of Commons. Parliamentary reform might have been almost indefinitely delayed, if it had not been for Telford, Brindley, and Stephenson.

In the days when travelling was difficult and dangerous, the right of representation was of little value. A journey from London to Northumberland was a more hazardous operation than a journey to New York is now; and the burgesses, who were entitled to send members to Parliament, found it difficult to obtain persons who were willing to act as their representatives. It became necessary to adopt the practice of making some allowance to the people who were thus selected; and the borough member became in consequence a paid delegate, and not an unpaid representative. In such a state of things the privilege of representation was naturally of little value. Places, which had originally enjoyed the right of returning members, ceased to exercise it. Places, in which

the Crown or some wealthy person had influence, were given the right, and no one ever questioned the power of the Crown to grant it. The Tudor sovereigns created borough after borough; but the creations attracted no attention.

The great contest of the seventeenth century fundamentally altered the position of the House of Commons. The House of Commons had asserted its right to exercise a decisive control over the government of the country and had established for ever its position and its influence Almost at the same time some progress was made towards better, cheaper, and quicker travelling. Parliament complained that country gentlemen were coming to London instead of staying at home, and that the country was being pauperised at the expense of the metropolis. They failed to observe that the causes, which were collecting all the country gentlemen into one centre, were contributing to increase the influence of the House of Commons. Yet there can hardly be a question that this was the case The moment that it became the fashion for a country gentleman to spend a certain period of each year in London, all the apprehensions connected with the journey disappeared. No further difficulty was experienced in obtaining a member for each borough, and a seat in Parliament became of value from the social influence and the position which it gave. In the meanwhile other parts of England shared the increasing prosperity which was visible in the metropolis. New centres of industry steadily acquired fresh importance, while the old boroughs, in which the county families had met together, either ceased to grow, or began slowly to decay. The country squire, who could spend his month or six weeks in London, was too grand a gentleman to patronise the bull-ring or the ball-room of his county town.

Population was slowly gravitating to particular centres; and the House of Commons, while the country

CHAP. II.

was changing, suddenly resisted further changes in its constitution. Before the seventeenth century the constitution of the House of Commons had been constantly altered. Henry VIII. created seventeen new boroughs, Edward VI. fourteen new boroughs, Mary ten new boroughs, Elizabeth twenty-four new boroughs, and James I. four new boroughs. Charles II. gave members to Durham and Newark; but, with this exception, no new borough was created, either in England or Wales, from the death of James I. to the Reform Bill of 1832. The House of Commons, after the Restoration, took the issue of writs into its own hands, and declined to recognise those which had been issued by the Crown.[1] The constitution of the House of Commons was thus stereotyped, for the first time in English history, at the very time at which the population of England was being collected in fresh centres. The representation of the people was becoming more unequal, and no attempt to redress the inequalities was made.

The House of Commons.

At the period at which this history opens the House of Commons consisted of 658 members: 489 of these were returned by England, 100 by Ireland, 45 by Scotland, and 24 by Wales. The representation of England was more unequal than that of either of the other divisions of the kingdom. The ten southern counties of England—Cornwall, Devonshire, Dorsetshire, Somersetshire, Wiltshire, Hampshire, Sussex, Kent, Berkshire, and Surrey—contained a population of about 2,900,000 souls and returned 237 members to Parliament. The thirty other counties of England contained a population of more than 8,350,000 souls, and returned 252 members to Parliament. A little more than a fourth of the population returned very nearly one half of the whole House of Commons. But this inequality was one of the least glaring defects of the representative system. Scotland

[1] Hansard's *Parl. Hist.*, vol. iv. pp. 507–512.

contained a population of nearly 2,100,000 persons; Cornwall contained rather more than a quarter of a million of people. Yet all Scotland returned only forty-five members, and the county of Cornwall returned no less than forty-four. Representation then bore no proportion to population; and the population, as a matter of fact, had little or nothing to do with the representation. It was stated in 1793 that the majority of the House of Commons was 'elected by less than fifteen thousand electors.' Seventy members were elected by thirty-four places, in which 'it would be to trifle with patience to mention any number of voters whatever, the election being notoriously a mere matter of form.' Ninety other members were elected for forty-six places, in none of which were there fifty voters. Thirty-seven other members were elected for nineteen places, in none of which were there one hundred voters. Fifty-two other members were elected by forty-six places, in none of which were there two hundred voters. Twenty other members were returned by Scotch counties, in none of which were there one hundred voters. Ten other members were returned by other Scotch counties, in none of which were there two hundred and fifty voters. Two hundred and ninety-four members,[1] being a majority of the entire House of Commons in 1793, were returned by constituencies none of which had two hundred and fifty, and in the great majority of which there were not one hundred voters. There were not four thousand electors in all Scotland.[2]

The borough owners.

Fifteen thousand electors nominally returned a majority of the whole House of Commons in 1793. But the share, which these fifteen thousand individuals had in the election, was purely nominal. One hundred and seventy-two of the English and Welsh members were

[1] The fifteen not specified in the text being returned by Scotch boroughs with less than 125 electors each.

[2] Petition of 1793; *Ann. Reg.* (1793), 83–103; Ibid. (1821), p. 49; May's *Const. Hist.*, vol. i. p. 295.

CHAP. II.

returned on the direct nomination of the Treasury or of individuals, and one hundred and thirty-seven members owed their return to the influence either of the Treasury or of individuals. Three hundred and nine out of the five hundred and thirteen members, belonging to England and Wales, owed their election to the nomination either of the Treasury or of one hundred and sixty-two powerful individuals. The forty-five Scotch members were nominated by thirty-five persons. Three hundred and fifty-four members were therefore returned on the recommendation of the Treasury and one hundred and ninety-seven patrons.[1] The union with Ireland, in 1801, added one hundred members to the roll of the House of Commons. But fifty-one of these were returned by thirty-six peers, and twenty by nineteen commoners.[2] The Union had increased the roll of the House to six hundred and fifty-eight; and four hundred and twenty-four of the six hundred and fifty-eight members were returned either on the nomination, or on the recommendation, of two hundred and fifty-two patrons.

At the commencement of every session, the House was in the habit of resolving that 'it is a high infringement upon the liberties and privileges of the Commons of Great Britain, for any Lord of Parliament, or any Lord-Lieutenant of a county, to concern themselves in the election of members to serve for the Commons in Parliament.' Yet two hundred and forty-five members were notoriously returned by the influence of one hundred and twenty-eight peers.[3] Lord Lonsdale, from returning

[1] See again the Return of 1793.

[2] Oldfield's *Rep. Hist.*, vol. vi. pp. 298, 299; May's *Const. Hist.*, vol. i. p. 300.

[3] One hundred and sixty-three members in Great Britain by 71 peers, *Ann. Reg.* 1793, p. 94; 31 in Scotland by 21 peers; and 51 members in Ireland by 36 peers. Oldfield, vol. vi. pp. 295–299. The statement in the text is the most moderate which can be given. Oldfield says that 371 of the English and Welsh members, the 45 Scotch members, and 71 Irish members, were all returned by nomination. See *Rep. Hist.*, vol. vi. pp. 285–300. Some difference of opinion must naturally have arisen as to the influence of persons in some of the larger consti-

nine members, was commonly known as 'the premier's cat-o'-nine-tails.'[1] The Duke of Newcastle, Lord Buckingham, Lord Mount Edgecumbe, and Lord Eliot returned, in 1793, six members each. The Duke of Marlborough and Lord Fitzwilliam, five each. The Duke of Northumberland, the Duke of Bedford, the Duke of Rutland, Lord Fitzwilliam, and Lord Stafford, four each. The Duke of Beaufort, Lord Sandwich, Lord Foley, and Lord Uxbridge, three each. Such was the state of things in 1793. In the next few years some of the boroughs changed hands, but the system remained unaltered. Lord Lonsdale retained his 'cat-o'-nine-tails;' the Duke of Newcastle, and Lord Buckingham, who had become a duke, their six members each. But other peers had, in the interval, extended their political influence by purchasing boroughs. Lord Darlington, in 1793, had only nominated one member for Winchelsea. He had since acquired the second seat in that borough, and had purchased Camelford, which had previously belonged to Sir Jonathan Phillips; and Ilchester, the property of Mr. Howard. He had now six seats at his absolute disposal, and had been rewarded with a marquisate for his investment.[2] Lord Westminster had also six seats; Lord Hertford six; Lord Fitzwilliam five; the Duke of Norfolk, Lord Powis, and Lord St. Germans four. Lord Cleveland's marquisate was an ever-present proof of the prizes, which were ready for the fortunate borough owner; and peers who desired higher titles, and commoners thirsting for peerages, naturally concluded that

tuencies; and the safest course therefore seems to be to take the most moderate of the computations.

[1] Wilberforce, vol. i. p. 184, and Oldfield, vol. vi. p. 286. The *Ann. Reg.*, 1793, p. 94, gives him only 7 members, 1 for Appleby, and 2 each for Cockermouth, Haslemere, and Westmoreland. The two members for Carlisle, where Lord Lonsdale's influence was great, made the other two. See also *Black Book*, vol. vi. p. 648.

[2] 'He got his boroughs to be made a marquis; he got rid of them to be made a duke.'—*Greville*, ii. 193. Oldfield gives him seven members. *Rep. Hist.*, vi. 287.

CHAP. II.

their easiest road to success lay through the acquisition of a borough.[1]

County constituencies.

The strength of the great political peers did not, however, lie in the boroughs alone. Many of the English counties returned, as a matter of course, the nominees of the great landowners. It was a common saying, attributed to Fox, that Yorkshire and Middlesex between them made all England.[2] Yet, even in Yorkshire, the contest rather lay between the Lascelles and the Fitzwilliams than the aristocracy and the people. Up to 1780, the member for Yorkshire had always been elected in Lord Rockingham's dining-room.[3] If such were the state of things in Yorkshire, it is easy to imagine what occurred in less populous counties. A contested election in many counties was a rare occurrence. It was found in 1831 that there were no poll books in Denbighshire. There had been no contest for a hundred years in Cheshire, in Nottinghamshire, and Cardiganshire. There had been no contest for nearly fifty years in Anglesey; and there had been no contest for twenty years in Derbyshire, Gloucestershire, Hertfordshire, Lancashire, Monmouthshire, Radnorshire, Flintshire, and Rutland.[4]

The condition of the Scotch counties was even worse. In England every forty-shilling freeholder was a voter. Manufacturers, large tenant farmers, opulent and important inhabitants, were excluded from the franchise unless they happened to possess a little land; but every landowner, not disqualified by religion, by age, or by sex, had a vote. In Scotland, however, the landowners had nothing whatever to do with the representation. The franchise was invested in the owners of superiorities; and these superiorities had the entire representation in their hands. Any owner of a superiority, producing 400*l.* a year, was entitled

[1] Parl. Ret. 1793, and see *Black Book*, pp. 646–648. Oldfield, *Rep. Hist.*, vol. vi. p. 287, says that the Duke of Norfolk had 11 members, and the Duke of Newcastle 7.

[2] Wilberforce, vol. ii. p. 133.

[3] Ibid. vol. i. p. 57.

[4] *Black Book*, p. 609.

to a vote; and the superiorities were cut up into different parcels of four hundred a year each, for the sake of giving votes. The owner of the superiority, as the direct grant from the crown was called, had not necessarily any land in the county; he did not necessarily reside in it; yet no one except the owner of a superiority was allowed a vote. The whole number of county electors in Scotland was variously estimated at from 2,500 to 2,900 persons. Fife was said to contain 240 voters, Cromarty only nine! Scott mentions incidentally that young Harden was returned for Roxburghshire at the memorable election of 1831, by a 'great majority of forty to nineteen!'[1] Yet Roxburgh had a population of more than 40,000 persons. 'The county of Bute, with a population of fourteen thousand, had twenty-one electors, of whom only one resided in the county.' 'At an election at Bute, not beyond the memory of man,' said the Lord Advocate in 1831, 'only one person attended the meeting, except the sheriff and the returning officer. He, of course, took the chair, constituted the meeting, called over the roll of freeholders, answered to his own name, took the vote as to the preses, and elected himself. He then moved and seconded his own nomination, put the question to the vote, and was unanimously returned.'[2]

A very different state of things prevailed in the Irish counties. In Ireland the right of election lay with the forty-shilling freeholders. But in Ireland gavelkind and cottier tenancy had multiplied small freeholds to an almost inconceivable extent, and had consequently placed the voting power of each county in the hands of a very large constituency. But, though Ireland had, in consequence, comparatively popular constituencies, the electors, chosen from the lowest and most dependent class of the

[1] May, vol. i. p. 295; *Ann. Reg.*, 1821, p. 49; Lord Russell, *Recollections and Suggestions*, p. 324; Lockhart's *Scott*, p. 725.

[2] *Hansard*, vol. vii. p. 529; and May, vol. i. p. 297.

CHAP. II.

population, were totally incapable of giving an independent vote. The persons, by whom their votes were directed, were either the great neighbouring landlord or the local priest. The former had the power of refusing them the extra plot of land, without which they could not hope to subsist; the latter could influence their superstitious imaginations with all the terrors of the Church of Rome. A county election in Ireland was as formal a matter as a county election in Great Britain.

Borough constituencies.

It was, however, in the boroughs that the great governing families exercised their chief authority. The borough constituency varied in different places. In some boroughs in England and Wales, and in every borough in Scotland, the members were returned by the corporation. The corporations were, at that time, unreformed; they were usually self-elected; and the provisions of the Test Act effectually excluded all Roman Catholics from sitting upon them. In other places in England and Wales, the members were returned by the inhabitants paying scot and lot, or in other words by the ratepayers; while in other places the potwallers or potwallopers—or all the resident inhabitants, who paid for their own subsistence—had a vote. In some places, again, the franchise was divided among these various classes. This variety of franchise created almost endless confusion. 'Your honourable house,' said the petitioners of 1793, 'is but too well acquainted with the tedious, intricate, and expensive scenes of litigation which have been brought before you, in attempting to settle the legal import of those numerous distinctions which perplex and confound the present rights of voting. How many months of your valuable time have been wasted in listening to the wrangling of lawyers upon the various species of burgagehold, leasehold, and freehold. How many committees have been occupied in investigating the nature of scot and lot, potwallers, commonalty, populacy, resiant inhabitants, and inhabit-

ants at large. What labour and research have been employed in endeavouring to ascertain the legal claim of borough men, aldermen, portmen, select men, burgesses, and councilmen; and what confusion has arisen from the complicated operation of clashing charters, from freemen, resident and non-resident, and from the different modes of obtaining the freedom of corporations by birth, by servitude, by marriage, by redemption, by election, and by purchase.'[1] Complicated, however, as these tenures were, there was one characteristic which was common to nearly all of them. The patron exercised an unbounded influence in the borough. In some cases the corporation, in other cases the inhabitants, in others, again, the ratepayers, nominally elected the members. Corporation, inhabitants, ratepayers, were all agreed in voting for the patron's nominee.

Close boroughs.

A few prominent examples will illustrate the position of the old boroughs. Lord Beverley's borough of Beeralston had only one house in it rated at over 10*l.* a year; Mr. Bankes' borough of Corfe Castle was a cluster of cottages round a venerable ruin. Lord Calthorpe's borough of Bramber was an agricultural district inhabited by about 100 persons. Lord Monson's borough of Gatton was a gentleman's park. Lord Caledon's borough of Old Sarum was a green mound. Lord Huntingfield's borough of Dunwich had been submerged for centuries beneath the North Sea. The nineteen electors of Helston voted unanimously with the Duke of Leeds.[2] There were 310 electors in Arundel, but 195 voted with the Duke of Norfolk.[3] At the general election of 1818 Lord Falmouth on the one side, and the Regent on the other, made the utmost endeavour to carry Truro. After a ruinous contest, Lord Falmouth's candidates polled twelve, the Regent's eleven votes.[4] These examples were, at the

[1] *Ann. Reg.*, 1793, p. 85.
[2] Colchester, vol. i. p. 59.
[3] Romilly, vol. iii. p. 75.
[4] Colchester, vol. iii. p. 52.

CHAP. II.

time, so notorious, that grave men thought that there was nothing ludicrous in gravely stating them. It seems hardly to have occurred to the politicians of that time that there was anything ridiculous in the mention of a contest between twelve electors on the one side and eleven on the other.

Their sale.

The borough owners disposed of their property in different ways. All of them acted on the blunt maxim which the Duke of Newcastle propounded in 1829—'Have I not the right to do what I like with my own?'[1] But, though they were probably unanimous in agreeing with the duke, they did not all carry out their theory in the same manner. Some borough owners simply sold their boroughs to the highest bidder. Ten thousand pounds was commonly offered for the two seats during a single Parliament.[2] Other borough owners again sold their seats, at a regular price, to members of their own party. Lord Mount Edgecumbe, for instance, used to receive 2,000*l.* from each of his candidates for Lostwithiel. Some portion of the 4,000*l.*, which he thus received, was distributed by him as plate money to the twenty or thirty electors of the borough. Another portion was devoted to local objects and to subsidising the borough funds.[3] The residue found its way into the patron's own pocket. Other borough owners again placed their patronage at the disposal of their party, or nominated their own relations or their own friends. But the borough owner usually considered that he owed nothing

[1] The debate on the Duke of Newcastle's conduct at Newark will be found in *Hansard*, New Series, vol. xxii. p. 1077. Sir W. Clinton, one of the members for Newark, had displeased the duke by voting contrary to his grace's wish in 1829. He was forced to resign. The duke nominated a new candidate, Sadler, a gentleman who acquired considerable reputation; and Sergeant Wilde had the temerity to stand against his grace's nominee. Wilde polled 587 votes, but was unsuccessful. Every one of the 587 voters who voted for him, and who held land under the duke, received notice to quit. The duke was remonstrated with, and then wrote the historical question quoted in the text.

[2] Romilly, vol. ii. p. 200.

[3] Private information.

either to his nominee or to the electors. Brougham, when he sat for Camelford, bitterly complained that the Duke of Bedford had sold the borough without giving him any notice of his intention of doing so;[1] and Brougham, when he made the complaint, was one of the ablest of the rising members of the Whig party, he was a personal friend of the duke's, and therefore sure of receiving more consideration than an ordinary member. The traffic in boroughs would, in fact, have been impossible if the patron had thought it necessary to consult the wishes of his representative; and the traffic in boroughs went on in the most open manner. An act was, indeed, passed in 1809 to stop the practice, but the practice still continued. It was deliberately stated in a petition to the House of Commons in 1817 that seats were bought and sold like tickets in the opera.[2] The best men saw nothing disgraceful in breaking the law and in buying a seat. Romilly declared in 1805 that he had formed 'an unalterable resolution never to come into Parliament,' unless he held a public office, 'but by a popular election or by paying the common price for' his seat.[3]

Promoted by increasing wealth.

The traffic in boroughs was indirectly promoted by the progress of the country during the eighteenth century. The conquest of India and the extraordinary impulse which was given to industrial enterprise created two new classes of wealthy persons. Men, who had gone out to India with younger sons' fortunes, returned home as wealthy nabobs. Men, who had devoted themselves to industrial pursuits at home, amassed large sums of money as cotton spinners, as potters, or in pursuit of some other trade. Nabobs and merchants were both anxious to secure their own position in society and promote their own influence in politics; and social distinction and political influence could equally be secured by a seat in Parlia-

[1] Brougham, vol. i. p. 528. [2] *Hansard*, vol. xxxv. p. 310.
[3] Romilly, vol. ii. p. 118.

CHAP. II.

ment. The borough owners found, in consequence, that there were new classes of purchasers for their property with longer purses than the country gentlemen or the political managers who had previously been their chief supporters. The price of boroughs accordingly rose in the market, and the rise in their value made any reform of Parliament more and more difficult. It was hardly to be expected that a borough owner would readily consent to sacrifice a property, bought with his own money, which was worth, on an average, 2,000*l.* a year.

The whole of the boroughs, however, were not at the disposal of any patron. In some places the constituency was free to return a candidate of its own choice. A few of the largest towns really prided themselves on securing the success of what was called a popular candidate, but even these places were disgraced by scenes which could hardly be witnessed now in Ireland. Lord J. Russell openly stated in the House of Commons in 1831 that if an intelligent foreigner were taken to a great and opulent town, Liverpool for instance, 'he would see bribery prevail to the greatest extent: he would see men openly paid for their votes.'[1] An election at Westminster involved a fortnight of riot and drunkenness. When Brougham stood for Liverpool it was recorded that two or three men were killed, but that the town was quiet.[2] A riot, in which only two or three men lost their lives, was thought hardly worth noticing. 'By long established custom the single vote of a resident elector at Hull was rewarded with a donation of two guineas; four were paid for a plumper; and the expenses of a freeman's journey from London averaged 10*l.* a piece. The letter of the law was not broken, because the money was not paid till the last day on which election petitions could be presented.'[3] 'The price of votes (at Maidstone) was as

Bribery.

[1] *Ann. Reg.* 1831, p. 7. [2] Brougham's *Memoirs*, vol. ii. p. 63.
[3] Wilberforce, vol. i. p. 16.

regularly fixed as the price of bread—so much for a single vote and so much for a plumper.'[1] There were about 240 electors at Abingdon, seventy of whom took money.[2] Lord Cochrane openly avowed in the House of Commons that, after his return for Honiton, he sent the town crier round the borough to tell the voters to go to the chief banker for 10*l.* 10*s.* each.[3] In 1766, Sudbury shamelessly offered itself for sale.[4] In 1768, the corporation of Oxford sold the representation of the city to the Duke of Marlborough and Lord Abingdon.[5] 'I doubt not,' wrote Wilberforce, 'that the bribery of all sorts and forms, and the drunkenness, which attend our present system, are the evils which call by far the loudest for reform.'

The bribery and drunkenness, which Wilberforce deplored, were encouraged by the law which protracted the taking of the poll. Rapid polling was indeed impossible. In 1807, for example, the poll clerk at Horsham had to take 'down the description of every burgage tenement from the deeds of the voters.' Only seventy-three electors were polled, but the complicated process necessarily occupied the greater part of two days.[6] It may easily be imagined that in larger constituencies a process of this kind must have taken not days but weeks: and the law allowed the poll to be open for weeks. At the general election of 1784 the contest for Westminster continued for upwards of six weeks, and was followed by a scrutiny which lasted for the best part of a year.[7] But the scandals connected with this election were even too great for the unscrupulous politicians of the eighteenth century. A law was passed 'limiting every poll to fifteen days, and closing a scrutiny within thirty days after the

[1] Greville, vol. iii. p. 184.
[2] Colchester, vol. i. p. 55.
[3] *Hansard*, 1st Series, xxxv. 92.
[4] Horace Walpole's *Memoirs of George III.*, vol. i. p. 42.
[5] Ibid. vol. iii. p. 153.
[6] Romilly, vol. ii. p. 202.
[7] *Ann. Reg.* (1784–5), pp. 174–180.

CHAP. II.

close of the poll.'[1] But this law, though it undoubtedly constituted a great reform, still permitted the most inordinate expenditure. In the great struggle in 1807, when Wilberforce, Lord Milton, and Lascelles were engaged in a triangular contest for the representation of Yorkshire, the poll was kept open for the full legal period of fifteen days, and Lord Milton and Lascelles spent between them 200,000*l.*[2] The lavish expenditure, inseparable from a contested election in a popular constituency, increased the influence of a few territorial magnates. It was hardly worth any man's while to waste a fortune on a single contest; and the expense of a county election gave, therefore, a monopoly of the representation to a few great families.

Expense.

Election Petitions.

Bribery was indirectly encouraged by another circumstance. In theory everybody reprobated it; in practice everybody laughed at it. Up to 1770, election petitions were tried in the whole House, and the decision of the House was avowedly pronounced on party grounds, and had no reference to the merits of the case. Sir Robert Walpole was driven from office by an adverse vote on the Chippenham election petition. In 1770, George Grenville persuaded Parliament to adopt a little better system. Under the Grenville Act, a committee was appointed to try the election. Forty-nine members were chosen by ballot; each party to the petition had the right of objecting to eighteen of these names; the remaining thirteen, associated with two others, one of whom was nominated on either side of the House, constituted the tribunal to determine the election. The Grenville committees, as they were commonly called, were far better tribunals than the whole House for determining the legality of an election. But the Grenville committees were as much influenced as the House had been by

[1] 25 Geo. III., c. 84; or, in the case of a general election, six days before the day on which the writ was returnable; May's *Const. Hist.*, vol. i. p. 293.

[2] Wilberforce, vol. iii. pp. 330–337.

party considerations.[1] In a committee of fifteen members one party or the other was necessarily in the majority, and the members usually voted with their political friends and disregarded their own conclusions. A tribunal of this description was not likely to stamp out bribery; and bribery consequently continued unchecked and unreproved. From the king on his throne to the potwalloper in the rotten borough, there was scarcely a person, who did not either receive or give a bribe. It would have been hardly an exaggeration to have applied to England the words which Isaiah applied to Judah: 'From the sole of the foot even unto the head, there was no soundness in it.'

Pensions and sinecures.

At the time, then, at which this history commences, the constituencies were divisible into two classes—some places were notoriously corrupt; others were notoriously in the hands of the landed interest. The class which thus enjoyed a monopoly of political power obtained its full share of the good things of this world. A political career was indeed a lottery, but it was a lottery in which the prizes were very large, and in which even moderate success was rewarded with extravagant liberality. A successful politician could easily ensure his own affluence, and could usually obtain a comfortable provision for his children. Lord Grenville, on retiring in 1801, had the effrontery to demand a pension of 1,500*l.* a year for Lady Grenville.[2] Yet Lord Grenville was auditor of the exchequer, a sinecure producing 4,000*l.* a year; and his younger brother, Thomas Grenville, received upwards of 2,000*l.* a year as one of the chief justices in eyre. The Duke of Portland succeeded Lord Grenville. His relative, Lord William Bentinck, received 1,131*l.* as clerk of the pipe in the exchequer, and 2,511*l.* as colonel of the 11th Hussars. The duke's son-in-law, Charles Greville,

[1] May's *Par. Pract.* pp. 600–601.
[2] She resigned it in 1820. *Hansard*, New Series, vol. i. p. 148.

CHAP. II.

received 600*l.* a year as controller of the excise; 350*l.* a year as secretary of the Island of Tobago, and 572*l.* a year as naval officer in Trinidad. His grandson, Charles Greville, whose posthumous memoir has obtained for him a durable reputation, received 2,000*l.* a year as clerk of the council—an office which was bestowed on him in reversion—and 3,000*l.* a year as secretary to the government of Jamaica, though he never set foot in Jamaica in his life.[1] Lord Sidmouth was another ex-prime minister. His eldest son drew 3,000*l.* a year as clerk of the pells. Lord Liverpool enjoyed 3,000*l.* a year as lord warden of the Cinque Ports. Such were the rewards, which the four men had obtained, who had had the good fortune to preside over his Majesty's Government. The great dignitaries of the law were even better paid than the highest officers in the state. Lord Eldon was chancellor. One of Lord Eldon's sons was a registrar of deeds for the West Riding, with 1,200*l.* a year; another of them received 2,000*l.* a year as receiver of fines and registrar of affidavits in the Court of Chancery. Lord Ellenborough was chief justice of the King's Bench; his eldest son drew very nearly 10,000*l.* a year as chief clerk of that court. Lord Ellenborough's predecessor, Lord Kenyon, had made his eldest son custos brevium, with 2,696*l.*, and a younger son drew more than 6,000*l.* a year in fees and compensation. Ten years before the great war began, Lord Thurlow had been chancellor. Fifty years after Waterloo, his grandson still enjoyed about 11,000*l.* a year as late patentee for the execution of the bankrupt laws, and clerk of the hanaper in Chancery.

These are a few of the instances, which might be given, of the extravagant provisions which successful politicians and successful lawyers were allowed to make for their posterity, or for themselves. It would be easy to extend the list to an almost indefinite length. It is difficult to

[1] Greville Memoirs. Confer *Hansard*, 3rd Series, vol. ii. p. 91.

define the duties of a teller of the exchequer, yet four tellers of the exchequer drew no less than 2,600*l.* a year each. No duties of special importance were attached to the registrarship of the Court of Admiralty; yet Lord Arden, the registrar, drew at least 10,000*l.* a year. The chief clerkship of the House of Commons would have been adequately paid with 2,000*l.* a year; and the fees of the office amounted to six times that sum.[1] The fees of the clerk of the pleas in Ireland amounted to 10,000*l.* a year; his deputy received no less than 7,000*l.*, not one shilling of which, according to a high authority, was legal.[2] The Duke of Grafton, in addition to some hereditary pensions, received 2,800*l.* a year as sealer of the King's Bench and Common Pleas. Lord Melville enjoyed about the same sum, as keeper of the privy seal in Scotland. 'The Countess of Mansfield,' wrote the editor of the 'Black Book' in 1830, 'receives 1,000*l.* a year from the Barbadoes planters, and the Duchess Dowager of Manchester 2,928*l.* a year as late collector of the customs outwards. Not long since a right honourable lady, a baroness, was sweeper of the Mall in the Park; another lady was chief usher in the Court of Exchequer.'[3] 'One of the four patentees' of the sinecure situation of 'custos brevium,' wrote Lord Colchester in his diary, 'was a woman, a second a Catholic, the third a lunatic, the fourth an infant.'[4] Lord Seaforth, though he had the misfortune to be deaf and dumb, was made governor of Barbadoes.[5] Lord Rosslyn, a general officer, was made director of chancery in Scotland.[6]

Peerages.

Pensions and places, however, were not the only rewards at the disposal of successful statesmen and successful lawyers. Peerages were granted with a prodigality which exceeds belief; and pensions were in their

[1] Colchester, vol. i. p. 482.
[2] Mr. L. Foster. Vide *Hansard*, vol. xxxiv. p. 8.
[3] *Black Book*, pp. 485 and 488.
[4] Colchester, vol. i. p. 143.
[5] Smiles' *Industrial Biography*, p. 302.
[6] At a salary of 1,800*l.*

CHAP. II.

turn bestowed to support the peerages which had thus been created. 'The far greater part of the peers,' wrote Queen Caroline to George IV. in 1820, 'hold by themselves and their families offices, pensions, and emoluments, solely at the will and pleasure of your majesty. There are more than four fifths of the peers in this situation![1] 'More than half of the present House of Lords,' said Wilberforce in 1811, 'has been created or gifted with their titles since I came into Parliament in 1780.'[2] 'No great thinkers, no great writers, no great orators, no great statesmen, none of the true nobility of the land, were to be found among the spurious nobles created by George III.' They chiefly consisted of 'mere lawyers,' and 'country gentlemen remarkable for nothing but their wealth, and the number of votes their wealth enabled them to control.'[3]

The evils of the system.

The system was productive of three mischievous consequences. Places, which were nothing but sinecures, were maintained for the purpose of enabling the minister to make a convenient provision for himself, his family, or his adherents. Places, which had only nominal duties assigned to them, or which were really necessary, were scandalously overpaid in order that they might prove acceptable to their fortunate recipients; and offices were bestowed, not on the most deserving candidates, but on the friends and partisans of the minister. The whole parliamentary system, moreover, moved on a hinge of corruption; and persons, known to be interested in the expenditure of the State, could not be believed to be the disinterested advocates of economical administration. The poor man, without political influence, had little or no chance of promotion; and honours and rewards were reserved not for the meritorious but the wealthy. The wealthy had the means of securing political influence.

[1] Yonge's *Liverpool*, vol. iii. p. 102. [2] Wilberforce, vol. iii. p. 561.
[3] *History of Civilisation*, vol. i. pp. 453, 454.

The influential politician was generally able to obtain rank. Rank was regarded as an admirable qualification for any office. The highest and lowest situations were lavished upon peers and their relations; and nothing was beneath the dignity of even a duke, provided that an adequate salary was attached to it. Nor were the sinecures the only places which were filled by the great governing families. The working offices of the State were similarly occupied. Commissioners and their secretaries owed comparatively little to their abilities. Their success in life was usually due either to their position or their birth. When the French war broke out in 1793, it never occurred to George III. that the command of the English army should be entrusted to a competent general. The natural leader of the king's army seemed to the king to be the king's son. When the incompetency of the Duke of York necessitated his recall, the king could not imagine that anyone else could be fit for the command except his own brother-in-law.[1] Rank, in short, was the passport to high office. Rank could be gained through political influence by any ambitious man; and the borough owners stuck accordingly to their privileges with a tenacity which withstood the onslaught of the reformers for forty years.

The only advantages of the system.

Rotten as the system was, deplorable as were its consequences, there were some compensating advantages connected with it. Men cannot take part in the struggles of a political career without mixing in society; and men fail to attain distinction, either in politics or society, without ability, information, and education. The ruling classes were so assured of this that they uniformly gave a polite education to their sons; and men of quality thought it as necessary to be versed in certain accomplishments as to be well dressed, or to be able to shoot. The ruling classes, moreover, conscious of their own inferiority in numbers, were ever on the look out to recruit their party

[1] See George III.'s Letters to Pitt in Jesse, vol. iii. p. 210.

CHAP. II.

with any particularly promising young men. A youth, who had acquired a reputation at Oxford or Cambridge, was certain to be introduced to some of the Whig or Tory party managers, and had a good chance of being offered a seat in Parliament. Clever young men began their political careers at school or at college; and fathers, with clever boys, sent their sons to school and college, in the hope of their being introduced in consequence to some political patron.

There is no doubt that this state of things was productive of one great national benefit. The door of the House of Commons was not solely opened to the wealthy, it was always ready to admit conspicuous talent. Men did not postpone their entry into Parliament till the close of their career, when success in business had enabled them to accumulate a fortune. Politics were the profession of their lives; the House of Commons their office, not the mere haven to which they retired in their old age. The prizes of political life, too, were so great, that they drew away the talent from other professions. Had they lived in Italy, to use Canova's striking illustration, Pitt and Fox would have been artists, and England would have had no reason to deplore her inferiority in art.[1] A system, under which all the rising men of the day regarded politics as a profession, and under which politics were studied with exclusive attention, naturally tended to create statesmanship. A rising young man became a member of the House of Commons as soon as he came of age. Lord Liverpool was elected for Appleby, Fox for Midhurst, Lord John Russell for Tavistock, before they were twenty-one years old.

Educational defects.

England then derived from the system the solitary advantage of having statesmen trained from their boyhood for their work; the more ambitious youth were certainly encouraged by the system to work at school and college,

[1] Alison, vol. i. p. 450, note.

from the knowledge that success at school and college might influence their whole career. A gentleman's education, indeed, was less complete than it is now. The boys at Eton, for instance, were taught almost exclusively Latin and Greek; and an Eton education was supposed to be the very best which a parent could give his son. The Eton boy, on leaving school, could write Latin Elegiacs or Greek Iambics with admirable ease and grace; but he could not speak a word of any modern language except his own. He was perfectly acquainted with the great authors of the ancient world, but he had never read a line of Chaucer or Froissart. He had read the speeches of Cicero; but he hardly knew the name of Bolingbroke. He had studied the dialogues of Plato; but he was ignorant of the writings of Locke. He could discuss the campaigns of Hannibal or Julius Cæsar with judgment, but he could hardly repeat the names of Frederick the Great's battles. He regarded the Gracchi as patriots, but he had an obscure notion that Adam Smith was a dangerous character. He knew the boundaries of the Roman empire; he could not have repeated the names of the English colonies.

Incomplete, however, as his education was, as far as it went it was admirable. The well educated man knew very little; but what he did know he knew very well. He had acquired very little serviceable information; but his mind was very well educated. Education is, after all, only the system under which the mind is trained. Men will perhaps always dispute whether physics or classics, mathematics or science, form the best subjects for training it. A man may bring his body into perfect condition by various kinds of exercise, and there is no reason for supposing that the mind may not be equally well trained by application to various kinds of studies. If, indeed, it were the object of school life to acquire a large stock of information, nothing could be worse than to devote the

CHAP. II.

greater portion of schooltime to the study of extinct and, so far as most men are concerned, useless languages. But ordinary men cannot acquire much information at school. They lay in their stores of knowledge when their education ceases; and, in this respect, our ancestors were certainly more advantageously situated than ourselves. In 1816, a man could not devote his whole time to reading novels, for the very good reason that there were only a few novels to be read. He was obliged, if he chose to read at all, to select books which on the whole were well worth reading. He read less than the modern Englishman, but the books which he did read were more useful to him. Educational institutions, however, were not free from the influence of the governing classes. Those who had the good fortune to be born in the purple were exempted at both Universities from the curriculum prescribed for ordinary students, and the visit of a monarch to a school was usually followed by the remission of a week's work. A whole term of academical study was dispensed with by the University of Oxford at the coronation of George IV. 'To remit a part of education,' wrote Ward to the Bishop of Llandaff, 'as you would remit a punishment, to what century does such a notion belong? A new reign then is to be reckoned as a joyous event for felons and undergraduates.'[1]

'The old English gentleman.'

It was, however, only the exceptional young man, with more than the average of ability and ambition, who was well educated and well informed. The ordinary English gentleman, if he were an elder son, lived on his paternal acres; if he were a younger son, he lived on the family living, or went abroad to fight his country's battles. There were few professions which a gentleman could enter. A clever boy was sent to the Bar; a dull boy was driven into the Church; a spirited lad was destined for the Navy, or, if he had money or interest, for the

[1] Ward's Correspondence with the Bishop of Llandaff, p. 249.

Army. But, outside the Bar, the Army, the Navy, and the Church, there was nothing which a gentleman could do. The prizes of the civil service were political, and the lower ranks of the offices were, with few exceptions, hardly good enough for the sons of a country gentleman. No one above the rank of an agricultural labourer would have dreamed of emigrating; no one with any pretensions to noble blood would have thought of going into trade. A gentleman's son would have rather died a pauper than have become a wine-merchant.

The eldest son succeeded as a matter of course to the paternal acres. He usually had many good qualities; but he had equally many infirmities. On the one hand he was honest and honourable, kind to his tenants, and, after a fashion, to the poor. On the other hand he still too frequently indulged in the sports, the language, and the habits which had been common among his forefathers. Men moving in high society could see a bull baited, a main of cocks fought, or the desperate struggles of the prize-fight, without losing caste. Men in good society were not ashamed to maintain that there was something peculiarly English in these brutal spectacles. The courage of the prize-fighter, the bulldog, and the cock, prompted men, so they thought, to noble deeds. After all, the prize-fighter's risk was smaller than that which was incurred by the duellist, and every gentleman was prepared at any moment to fight a duel. Duelling had probably its origin in that remote period when trial by combat was regarded with the solemnity of a judicial proceeding. It was sanctioned by the deeds of the knights errant and the hallowing reminiscences of the days of chivalry. Everyone remembers the page in Brougham's life, in which he tells the story of his brother Peter's death in a duel. But plain men like Peter Brougham were not the only duellists. A man could hardly enter a public career without running the risk of

Duels.

CHAP. II.

fighting a duel. Pitt was prime minister of England, Tierney was temporarily leader of the Opposition, when they fought at Wimbledon. Canning and Castlereagh were two of the most prominent members of the Cabinet when they met in 1809. The wound which Canning received did not teach him discretion. On two subsequent occasions he was on the eve of fighting a duel. He challenged Burdett, and Burdett's explanation only averted a meeting. An appeal was made to the Speaker's authority to stop the possibility of a contest between Canning and Brougham. Brougham himself was challenged by Stapylton for some hasty words spoken in contesting Yorkshire in 1830. In 1826 Beaumont and Lambton fought on Bamborough Sands in consequence of some expressions which Beaumont had used on the hustings at Alnwick. Wellington was prime minister of England when he challenged Lord Winchilsea in 1829. The Duke of Bedford and the Duke of Buckingham fought in Kensington Gardens in 1822. Grattan was elected for Dublin in 1800, made a speech against the Union, and fought a duel on the same day. O'Connell had killed his man. A literary quarrel led to Sir A. Boswell's death in a duel in 1822. Jeffrey, the editor of the 'Edinburgh Review,' was challenged by Moore the poet. Scott, in 1827, was prepared to meet an obscure French officer.[1]

Intemperance.

Duels, however, frequent as they were, constituted only occasional events in a man's lifetime. Intemperance was the Englishman's everyday fault. Men, indeed, no longer got drunk at night as regularly as they went out hunting or shooting in the morning. But hard drinking was the vice of the nation from the highest to the lowest. To be drunk occasionally was no offence against good breeding. Some persons will recollect Scott's apology for a drunken clergyman: 'The crime of drunkenness consists not in a man's being in that situation twice or

[1] *Ann. Reg.* 1822, pp. 62, 82. Ibid. 1826, p. 103. Lockhart's *Scott*, p. 665.

thrice in his life, but in the constant and habitual practice of the vice; the distinction between "ebrius" and "ebriosus" being founded on common sense and recognised by law.'[1] George IV., when Prince of Wales, invited the Duke of Norfolk to dinner for the express purpose of making him drunk. The Duke of York drank six bottles of claret at a sitting.[2] Claret, however, was only within the reach of dukes and spendthrifts. Taxation had raised its price and restricted its use.

> Bold and erect the Caledonian stood,
> Old was his mutton, and his claret good;
> Let him drink port, the English statesman cried—
> He drank the poison, and his spirit died.[3]

So ran John Home's epigram.

> Others had tasted claret till they now
> To humbler port would turn,

wrote Crabbe in the 'Borough.'[4]

The Game Laws.

If drinking were too frequently the country gentleman's chief pastime at night, hunting and shooting were his chief occupation by day. Neither of these sports were indeed carried on under the conditions which have made them popular since. The land was not drained; the enclosures were small; they were separated by huge shores or fences which no horse could leap; and the coverts or woods were large and near each other. Pace, in its modern sense, was impracticable, and men rode to hounds for the pleasure of seeing them work. The hare, which ran in a circle, became under these circumstances a more popular object of chase than the fox, which ran straight to the nearest covert, from which it taxed the skill of the huntsman to drive him. Shooting, too, was carried on with difficulty with the old flint locks and

[1] Lockhart's *Scott*, p. 57. In *Waverley* Bradwardine excuses Balmawhapple by the same distinction, ch. xii.

[2] Thackeray's *Four Georges*, pp. 197 and 199.

[3] Lockhart's *Scott*, p. 372.

[4] *The Borough*, Letter VI.

CHAP. II.

cumbersome guns of the day; and shooting, in the modern sense of battues, was only beginning to be known. In 1827 Lord Eldon referred in the House of Lords to 'the objectionable modern practice of collecting game in large quantities for the purpose of battues.' 'Every plantation,' he said on another occasion, 'was turned into a poultry-yard, and a sportsman was thought nothing of unless he could kill his thousand birds a day.'[1] The Duke of Gloucester, in 1816, shot 254 head of game in one day at Mr. Coke's of Holkham;[2] and Greville has recorded in his diary a day's sport which would have done credit to these modern times of bloodshed.

The spirit of the old forest laws, which the Norman kings had introduced into England, still lingered in the statutes which Parliament had made for the preservation of game. No one, who was not a landowner, was allowed to kill game; no one was entitled to sell game. The common law distinctly recognised that game was the property of the landowner, *ratione soli*. But, 'in limitation, and to a certain degree in derogation, of the common law, a variety of statutes subjected to penalties persons who, not having certain qualifications, shall, even upon their own land, kill any of those wild animals which come under the denomination of game.' The qualification to kill game was confined by a statute of Charles II. to persons having lands of inheritance of 100*l.* per annum, or leases of 150*l.* (to which were added some other descriptions of personal qualifications), and persons not having such qualifications were not allowed to have or keep game dogs. A subsequent statute of George II. (28 Geo. II., c. 12) carried this system still further; and enacted penalties against unqualified, and finally against qualified, persons who shall buy, sell, or offer to sell, any hare, pheasant, partridge, &c. Similar penalties were enacted against unqualified persons having

[1] Twiss' *Eldon*, vol. ii. p. 540; vol. iii. p. 4. [2] *Ann. Reg.* 1816, p. 193.

game in their possession.[1] But legislation did not cease with the reign of George II. As late as 1816 an Act, passed without a single word of comment, punished with transportation for seven years any person who should be found by night in any open ground, having in his possession any net or engine for the purpose of taking or destroying any hare, rabbit, or other game. So carelessly was the act drawn that the limits of night were fixed between October and March at from 8 P.M. to 7 A.M., so that, according to this law, even a qualified person, who went out before seven in the morning to shoot game, was liable to be transported as a felon.[2] It was not, however, likely that a qualified person would ever be subjected to these penalties. The law was made to repress poaching, and a poacher's life was regarded with about as much respect as a rabbit's. Spring guns were commonly set in every plantation. In 1821 a farmer, renting about 500 acres of land, was fined for keeping a setter.[3] In 1822 a farmer, coursing hares on his own land, with the permission of his own landlord, was summoned by the keeper of the adjoining landowner for doing so. The adjoining landowner in this particular instance was the Duke of Buckingham, and the farmer was literally convicted by the duke himself, in the duke's private house, at the instance of one of the duke's keepers, and on the evidence of another of his keepers.[4] 'The forest laws,' Blackstone had written in the previous century, and the passage still remained true, 'are now mitigated, and by degrees grown entirely obsolete; yet, from this root has sprung a bastard slip, known by the name of the game laws, now arrived to, and wantoning in, the highest vigour: both founded upon the same unreasonable notion of permanent property in wild crea-

[1] Report of Select Committee of 1816; *Ann. Reg.*, vol. lviii. p. 443.

[2] Romilly, vol. iii. p. 275; *Hansard*, vol. xxxv. p. 339.

[3] *Ann. Reg.* 1822, Chron. p. 8. The case, it is fair to add, was reversed on appeal.

[4] *Hansard*, N. S. vol. viii. p. 1292.

CHAP. II.

tures, and both productive of the same tyranny to the commons: but with this difference, that the forest laws established only one mighty hunter throughout the land; the game laws have raised a little Nimrod in every manor.'[1]

The severe laws, which Blackstone thus reprobated, might at least have been expected to have led to the effectual preservation of game. They did, however, nothing of the kind. Neither the attitude of Parliament nor the decisions of the county magistrates could induce the people generally to regard poaching as a crime. It is incidentally stated in the 'Black Book' that 12,805 persons were convicted of criminal offences in 1830, and that no less than 1,987 of these convictions were for offences against the game laws.[2] Though, too, it was illegal to sell game, it was notorious that game was sold by nearly every poulterer. Laws of the severest character had not even the negative merit of enforcing obedience by their severity.[3]

The game laws were maintained in the interest of a small body of persons. The incomes of these landowners were not so large as those which their descendants now enjoy. But some members of the upper classes had very considerable rent-rolls. The casual expressions of contemporary writers enable us to form a fair estimate of the cost of living at the commencement of the century. When the loyalty loan was proposed, Lord Colchester said that the outside expenses of the aristocracy were calculated at 6,000*l.* a year. Sheridan, some years after-

[1] Blackstone's *Commentaries*, b. iv. p. 416.

[2] *Black Book*, p. 270.

[3] The sale of game was regulated by two Acts passed in the 5th of Anne and the 28th of George II. By the former of these Acts it was illegal for higglers, chapmen, carriers, innkeepers, and victuallers to sell game. By the latter, gamekeepers were prevented from selling game without the consent of their employers; and all persons, qualified or not, who sold game, were considered chapmen. When any game was found in the house of an unqualified person, it was considered as exposed for sale. See, inter alia, *Hansard*, vol. xxxv. p. 877.

wards, publicly declared that 2,000*l.* a year was in his opinion absolute poverty.[1] The ordinary country gentleman had probably a smaller income than that which Sheridan's extravagant disposition regarded as poverty. But, as a class, they were better off than they had ever been before. The war had laden England with heavy taxation, and the country gentlemen paid a share of the taxes; but there can be no doubt that the war, while it lasted, had increased their importance and swelled their rent-rolls. Parliament was a Parliament of landlords, and the welfare of the landed interest had for generations been the paramount interest of the legislature. If the price of corn fell, it was argued, land would be thrown out of cultivation, men would be thrown out of work, rents would fall, rates would rise, and speedy ruin would overtake the country. The main object of all legislation then seemed to be to keep up the price of corn by artificial means. The landed interest has had the credit of selfishly initiating this policy for its own purposes. But those, who have closely investigated the subject, are aware that this charge is unjust. The protection of corn was not originally demanded by the landowners: it was a concession willingly made by the landowners to the reasoning of the political arithmeticians of the day. At the close of the seventeenth century the economists were universally of opinion that the land should be protected; and Davenant and Mun are as much responsible for the system of protection as Adam Smith is entitled to the credit of having originated free trade.

Corn Laws.

It was the interest of the consumer that corn should be cheap; the landlord thought that it was his interest that it should not be too cheap. To absolutely prohibit the import of corn was equivalent to condemning the consumer, in bad seasons, to famine prices: to absolutely prohibit its export was equivalent to compelling the farmer,

[1] Colchester, vol. i. p. 86; Wilberforce, vol. iii. p. 26.

CHAP. II.

in good years, to submit to a price which he thought inadequate for his produce. The dilemma had led to many remedies in former times. For nearly four centuries after the Conquest the export of corn was entirely prohibited. In the reign of Henry VI. the injustice which this law inflicted on the farmer was partially remedied. Corn was allowed to be exported when its average price was less than 6*s.* 8*d.* a quarter. Thirty years afterwards a further boon was afforded to the landed interest: the import of corn was prohibited till the price rose to 6*s.* 8*d.* a quarter. The alteration in the value of money necessitated changes in these figures. But the system still continued in force. In 1670, wheat was allowed to be exported when the price was below 53*s.* 4*d.* When its price rose above 53*s.* 4*d.*, it was allowed to be imported on paying a duty of 8*s.* A further step, in the same direction, was taken after the Revolution of 1688. Wheat was still allowed to be sent abroad: and, when its price fell below 48*s.* a quarter, a bounty of 5*s.* was paid on its exportation.

The system, which had been thus adopted, and which continued in force for eighty years, was avowedly designed for the protection of the landed interest; and the advantage, which agriculturists derived from it, was very great. The farmer was protected from all foreign competition till the price of grain rose to an unusual point; and he then competed on most favourable terms with the foreigner. If, on the contrary, the price of grain fell, he could always raise it artificially by sending it abroad. The Government paid him 5*s.* a quarter on its exportation; or added more than 10 per cent. to the value of the commodity. It is stated by McCulloch that, during the ten years ending in 1751, no less than 1,515,000*l.* were paid in bounties on the exportation of corn. In other words, Government voted a direct subsidy of this amount to the landed interest. But the subsidy; which the Government

thus voted, must have formed only a portion of the charge which the policy imposed on the taxpayer. Government could not have annually paid a bounty on the export of some 600,000 quarters of corn, without concurrently raising the price of all corn. The taxpayer was taxed, the consumer was indirectly charged, for the sake of fostering and promoting the landed interest.

Lord North had the credit of adopting a wiser policy in 1773. The population had rapidly increased; new industrial centres were acquiring importance; and the corn of the kingdom was not more than sufficient to feed the inhabitants of the country. Under these circumstances the legislature decided that the bounty, paid on the export of corn, should cease at 44*s.*; and that no corn should be exported when the price rose above that sum. When the price rose above 48*s.* foreign corn was allowed to be imported on paying a nominal duty of 6*d.* per quarter. The system, which was thus instituted, lasted for eighteen years, and was the nearest approach to free trade in corn which was made before 1846. The landowners, however, never tolerated the new law. A clamour was gradually raised against it; and to this clamour Pitt, in 1791, found it necessary to give way. By the Act, which was then passed, a bounty was paid on the exportation of corn when its price was below 44*s.*; its exportation without a bounty was allowed up to 46*s.*; a prohibitory duty of 24*s.* 3*d.* was levied on the import of corn when its price was below 50*s.*; a duty of 2*s.* 6*d.* was charged when the price was above 50*s.* and below 54*s.*; and the nominal duty of 6*d.* ranged when the price was 54*s.* and upwards.

The system of 1791 lasted for only thirteen years. Six years after it was introduced the Bank suspended its payments in cash. The price of gold slowly rose; and the rise in the price of gold affected, in at least an equal degree, the price of every other commodity. Wheat rose

CHAP. II.

in 1801 to the unprecedented price of 5*l.* 19*s.* 6*d*; and, except in 1803, its average price did not fall below 62*s.* a quarter for twenty years. It was evident that, if the system of 1791 were to be maintained, it was absolutely essential to alter the figures in the Act. The prohibitory duty, therefore, of 24*s.* 3*d.* on imports was extended to all corn imported when the price was below 63*s.*; the intermediate duty of 2*s.* 6*d.* was charged when the price ranged between 63*s.* and 66*s.*; while the nominal duty of 6*d.* a quarter, levied in 1773 on corn when the price was above 44*s.*, and in 1791 when the price was above 54*s.*, was only charged when the price rose above 66*s.* But the landed interest were not satisfied with these concessions. The victories of 1813 promised a return of peace; the prospects of peace lowered the value of gold; and the fall in the price of gold affected the value of other commodities. Corn fell rapidly, and the landowners were alarmed for their rents. They persuaded Lord Liverpool to prohibit the importation of all foreign corn when the price was below 80*s.* a quarter, and all colonial corn when the price was below 67*s.*[1]

> 'For what were all these country patriots born?
> To hunt, and vote, and raise the price of corn.'[2]

Enclosure Bills.

The high prices, which had thus prevailed, and which had been encouraged by the legislature, had given an extraordinary stimulus to agriculture. Up to 1760 only 244 enclosure bills had ever been passed. Six hundred and fifty additional bills were passed in the fourteen suc-

[1] The whole subject of the corn laws is treated in a masterly manner by McCulloch, from which the account in the text is in the main abridged. For the sake of brevity the price of wheat has alone been referred to in the text, and, whenever the word corn is used, it is intended to mean wheat. Other kinds of corn were dealt with on the same principles, but the prices of course varied. The averages, quoted in the text, are from McCulloch's *Commercial Dict.* Porter gives them slightly differently; *Progress of the Nation*, p. 88.

[2] Byron, *The Age of Bronze.*

ceeding years. Eight hundred and ninety-four enclosure bills were therefore sanctioned before the passing of the Act of 1773. Seven hundred and five bills were passed from 1773 to 1792, or during the nineteen years when Lord North's Act continued in force. But the Act of 1791 immediately altered this state of things. A fresh stimulus was given to agricultural improvements, and in the nineteen years from 1792 to 1811, 1,481 bills were passed. The artificial encouragement which protective legislation had afforded to the landowner had more than doubled the rate at which land had been previously enclosed. Rapid, however, as the process of enclosure had been, land continued to be reclaimed with the same extraordinary rapidity. 'During the last ten years,' said Lord Brougham in 1816, enclosure bills to the amount of twelve hundred have been passed, and the number of acres thereby brought into cultivation has been estimated at two millions.[1]

Agricultural improvements.

Vast as had been the area, which had been brought into cultivation since the accession of George III., it is probable that the improved system of agriculture had done more even than the reclamation of land to promote the production of the kingdom. 'At the beginning of the eighteenth century, the agriculture of our country was still of the rudest kind. With the exception of certain parts of England, the land was still for the most part unenclosed; the live stock of each township grazing together, and the arable land being occupied in common field or runrig.' Successive crops of corn were grown until the land was utterly exhausted; and its cultivators were com-

[1] *Encyclopædia Britannica*, ad verb. Agriculture; Porter's *Progress of the Nation*, p. 146; McCulloch's *Dict.*, Corn Laws and Corn Trade; Brougham's *Speeches*, vol. i. p. 512. There is reason for saying that Brougham underestimated the matter. The enclosures are given by Porter in decades—

	Acres.
From 1760–1769 . .	704,550
„ 1770–1779 . .	1,207,800
„ 1780–1789 . .	450,180
„ 1790–1799 . .	858,270
„ 1800–1809 . .	1,550,010
„ 1810–1820 . .	1,560,990

Progress of the Nation, p. 154.

CHAP. II.

pelled to leave it fallow till its properties were recruited by the action of the rain and of the atmosphere. The latter part of the eighteenth century 'is memorable in our agricultural annals for the introduction of various important improvements. It was during this period that the genius of Bakewell produced such an important change in the character of our more important breeds of live stock. . . . A more rational system of cropping now began very generally to supersede the thriftless and barbarous practice of sowing successive crops of corn until the land was utterly exhausted, and then leaving it foul with weeds to recover its power by an indefinite period of rest. Green crops, such as turnips, clover, and ryegrass, began to be alternated with grain crops; and hence the name of alternate husbandry by which this system is generally known.' The rotation of crops, which was thus commenced, in its ultimate effects doubled or even trebled the producing powers of land.[1]

Rise of rents during the war.

The vast additions, which had been made to the extent of land under cultivation, and the improvements in agriculture itself, had, of course, the effect of largely increasing the rent-roll of the landlords as a class. The rental of land in Scotland (where the improvements had been most marked), rose from 2,000,000*l.* in 1795, to 5,278,000*l.* in 1815.[2] The rental of land in Great Britain did not probably increase with equal rapidity. But, in some cases, the increase was very marked. 'In the county of Essex, farms could be pointed out which were let, just before the war of the French Revolution, at less than 10*s.* an acre, and which rose rapidly during the progress of that contest until, in 1812, the rent paid for them was from 45*s.* to 50*s.* per acre. . . . In Berkshire and Wiltshire there are farms which in 1790 were

[1] See the admirable and exhaustive article on Agriculture in the new edition of the *Encyclopædia Britannica*. [2] Ibid. p. 301.

let at 14*s.* per acre, and which in 1810 produced to the landlord a rent of 70*s.*, being a five-fold advance.'[1]

So prodigious an advance in the prosperity of the landed classes naturally increased their own importance. The adoption of the system, which their representatives had instituted in Parliament, had been synchronous with an unprecedented increase in the value of land; and a better informed person than an ordinary squire might have been excused for believing that the effect, on which he was priding himself, was due to the causes which he had advocated. But, great as had been the increase in the prosperity of the landed interest, their power had not increased with commensurate rapidity. Notwithstanding his majority in Parliament, Lord Liverpool in 1814 was actually unable to persuade the House of Commons to pass a fresh measure of protection. The manufacturers and consumers were strong enough to defeat the proposal; and Lord Liverpool was compelled to postpone the measure and introduce it in a modified form in the following year. There are few more singular circumstances than this in the history of England. A protectionist minister, in a Parliament of landlords, was practically defeated by the outside pressure of public opinion. The remonstrances of the masses triumphed for the time over the selfish interests of the ruling classes.

Declining influence of the landed classes.

There were, in fact, at this very time three distinct influences which were slowly shaking the confidence of the landed interest in their own power. Up to the beginning of the present century, a country gentleman, when he travelled, travelled uniformly alone. If he were wealthy he used his carriage; if he were poor he rode on horseback. But, with improved roads and increased facilities for travelling, the country gentleman no longer travelled alone. The coach conveyed him much more quickly, much more conveniently, much more cheaply,

[1] Porter's *Progress of the Nation*, p. 151.

CHAP. II.

and much more safely, than his own horses; and the country gentleman consequently, like the rest of the world, travelled in the coach. In the coach he was brought face to face with classes with whom he had had no previous communication. He heard ideas expressed which he had never dreamed of; and he probably, before the end of his journey, found that there were gentlemen in the world better educated, better informed, and with fuller purses, than himself or his brother squires. The coach, in fact, was a mighty leveller; but the coach did more than level. It introduced facilities for travelling, which had never previously existed, and, in consequence, encouraged large numbers of persons to travel. It was estimated in 1818 that '79,000 travellers were gratifying their desires by going abroad;'[1] and every one of these 79,000 persons probably had their minds enlarged by their experiences.[2] The country gentleman who went abroad discovered that other nations had their own good qualities, and that the world did not exist for the sake of the landed interest alone. But there was a third cause which was probably more potent than either of the foregoing. A class, to be powerful or to hold its own, must give some evidence of its power. In previous generations the country gentlemen of England had produced some of the greatest names which are recorded in history. But the country gentlemen hardly held their own at the conclusion of the great war. Lord Eldon represented their feelings more accurately than any other statesman, and Lord Eldon was the son of a hoastman in Newcastle.

[1] Alison, vol. i. p. 340; cf. *Hansard*, vol. xxxviii. p. 437, where the number is given as 99,000.

[2] This travelling was the first cause of a new custom, or of the revival of an old one. Before the peace no English gentleman would have thought of letting his beard grow. After the peace men adopted the fashion of beards. Wilberforce, in 1815, records that he was introduced to the bearded Lord P., but found him, *under this strange exterior*, very mild and pleasing. Wilberforce, vol. iv. p. 279. The phrase implies that Wilberforce anticipated that a man with so strange an exterior as a beard could be neither mild nor pleasing. So curiously does custom prejudice the best of men.

Romilly and Whitbread were attacking their privileges and their system; and Romilly was the son of a London tradesman, Whitbread was a brewer. Lord Exmouth was gallantly winning new laurels for the British navy, and Lord Exmouth's father had commanded a Dover packet. Brindley was developing the country gentlemen's estates by showing them how to construct canals, and Brindley had been an ordinary mechanic. Telford was promoting their prosperity by forming roads, and Telford had begun life in a village school in Scotland. Davy was making it practicable to work their mines, and Davy had been a chemist's assistant. Lawrence was painting their portraits, and Lawrence was the son of a country innkeeper. Turner was enchanting them with his glorious landscapes, and Turner had commenced his career in a barber's shop. Chantrey was engaged on their monuments, and Chantrey had been a common carpenter. The success which these men had achieved was familiar to them all. But they had also heard how a poor weaver, Hargreaves, had invented the spinning-jenny; how a barber's assistant, Arkwright, had made a water frame; how Watt, a mathematical instrument maker, had invented the steam engine; and how Peel, a yeoman's son, had acquired a fortune in trade and received a baronetcy in recognition of his success. Had not this very Peel's eldest son beaten all their own sons at Oxford? Was he not now, humble as was his origin, the ablest subordinate in the Tory government, the hope of the Tory party? Nothing, to quote the trite proverb, succeeds like success. The country gentlemen were increasing their rent-rolls, but they were not extending their influence. New men, full of new ideas and new discoveries, were laying the foundations of a new England, and, in the sequel, were to sweep political power from the grasp of the landed interest.

But the country gentlemen, though their influence

CHAP. II.

Real property not applicable to debts.

was on the wane, were still powerful. Freehold estates were not subject to simple contract debts. If a country gentleman were in debt his creditors could only obtain execution on half of the profits of his real property. If he died in debt, his real property passed to his heirs, and was not applicable to his creditors. A very distinguished man was endeavouring session after session to remedy this great abuse. Sir Samuel Romilly was the most remarkable of the small band of reformers living during the first twenty years of the nineteenth century. The honesty of his nature made him instinctively revolt from the notion that a man should be allowed to escape his creditors because he was a landowner, and he accordingly undertook under most favourable circumstances to amend the law. He was himself attorney-general; he had a right to rely on the active assistance of the Government; and the leader of the Opposition (Perceval) supported his measure. His bill passed through its earlier stages without encountering much opposition. But, before it reached the third reading, formidable perils awaited it. The Talents Government was breaking up; a Tory government was in process of formation. Romilly's own friends were occupied with their own resignations. Perceval was busily promoting the formation of a new ministry. No one, under such circumstances, thought it worth while to trouble himself about Romilly's bill, and the measure was lost in a thin house.[1] A few days after the bill was rejected, Romilly brought in a new bill for the same purpose, but confined to persons possessing real property who were in trade. The country gentlemen had no objection to make tradesmen pay their debts, and it was passed without any difficulty.[2] The larger proposal never became law during its author's lifetime. One great lawyer declared that the measure, if adopted, would annihilate small freeholds; another great lawyer spoke

[1] Romilly, vol. ii. p. 186.

[2] Ibid. pp. 198 and 222.

'with admiration of that regard which our ancient law had always had for landed property;' a third equally celebrated lawyer insisted that 'such dangerous innovations tended to destroy the law of primogeniture, and to reduce all lands to gavelkind tenure;' and these arguments were held sufficient grounds for refusing an act of common honesty.[1] CHAP. II.

The Church.

In 1815 the Church of England retained the supremacy which it had long enjoyed. But the condition of the Church was in some respects similar to that of the laity. A few fortunate individuals enjoyed all the prizes; the mass of the clergy were in extreme poverty. In 1818 England and Wales was divided into 10,421 benefices.[2] Every incumbent was bound by law to reside on his own living for a certain number of months in each year. Yet 7,358 incumbents were non-resident in 1809, 5,840 in 1810, and 6,311 in 1811.[3] The abuse of non-residence had been largely increased by some recent legislation. Till the commencement of the nineteenth century, the clergy had been compelled by some old laws of Henry VIII. and Elizabeth to reside within their own parishes. 'A clergyman living in the city was fined for residing beyond his parish, though there was no sufficient residence in it for his family and himself.' The law was inelastic, and, like many inelastic laws, was harsh. The grievance was a real one, and required consideration. Sir William Scott, Lord Eldon's elder brother, succeeded in amending the law in 1802. The Act, which was then passed, continued to make residence the rule, but it gave the bishops a discretionary power of relaxing it. It removed the grievance of the clergy, but it transferred the grievance

[1] Romilly, vol. iii. p. 188. See also Lord Russell's *Recollections*, p. 28.

[2] *Ann. Reg.* 1818, Chron. p. 32. The returns of 1827 (Parl. Paper, 471, Sess. 1830; *Black Book*, p. 37) mention 10,533 benefices. The number also varies slightly in the diocesan returns for 1809, 1810, and 1811.

[3] *Black Book*, p. 36.

CHAP. II.

Non-residence.

to the congregations. The provision that every clergyman should be compelled to reside for a certain number of months in each year within the limits of his parish had, to a certain extent, restricted the multiplication of pluralities. It had insured the presence of a resident clergyman in the majority of parishes. Under Sir William Scott's Act, however, a pliant bishop could be easily persuaded to exempt his clergy from the operation of the Act. In 1813 there were only forty-five resident incumbents on 140 livings in the diocese of Ely. There were seventeen other incumbents, who resided in the neighbourhood of their livings and performed their duty; and in addition to these there were thirty-five curates. Yet these livings embraced a population of upwards of 82,000 souls, and afforded an aggregate income of upwards of 60,000*l*.[1]

The gross abuse, to which Sir William Scott's Act had thus led, had been foreseen by its author. He had himself desired to supplement it with an enactment that the non-resident clergyman should provide a curate in charge, with a suitable salary. Rarely has a moderate proposal excited so general a consternation. Every effort was made by the pluralists to defeat the measure, and Scott, who represented the University of Oxford, was compelled by his clerical constituents to withdraw it. Perceval, who at the time was attorney-general in Pitt's second ministry, took up the bill which Scott had been compelled to drop. But, though he brought in the bill twice as attorney-general, and subsequently as leader of the House of Commons, he was never able to carry it. The Whigs, much to their discredit, opposed it for party reasons. The bishops, still more to their discredit, opposed it from selfish motives; and it was not till after Perceval's death

[1] See Mr. Wright's Letter of Jan. 18, 1814, in the *Morning Chronicle*, quoted in *Black Book*, p. 35.

in 1812 that Lord Harrowby succeeded in carrying it through Parliament.[1]

The evil of non-residence was not the only cancer which was eating into the fabric of the Church. The same evil which was visible in the public offices existed in the Church. Men received preferment neither from their abilities nor from their deserts, but through the interest of their friends. Paley was incomparably the ablest of living divines. But no one ever dreamed of offering him a bishopric. 'Paley is a great man,' said George III.; 'will never be a bishop—will never be a bishop.'[2] The highest offices in the Church were given to the sons of great men, or to the tutors of great men. In 1815 the Archbishop of Canterbury was a grandson of the Duke of Rutland; the Archbishop of York a son of Lord Vernon; the Bishop of Winchester a brother of Lord North; the Prince Bishop of Durham a son of Lord Barrington; Lord Cornwallis was Bishop of Lichfield; the Bishop of Exeter was a son of Lord Chichester; the Bishop of Gloucester a brother of Lord Harrowby; the Bishop of Chester a brother of Lord Ellenborough; the Bishop of Sodor and Man a grandson of the Duke of Athol. Bathurst, the Bishop of Norwich, was half-uncle to Bragge Bathurst, Lord Sidmouth's brother-in-law. Lord Sidmouth had obtained for one of his tutors, Dr. Huntingford, the bishopric of Hereford; for another, Dr. Goodenough, the bishopric of Carlisle. The Duke of Rutland had obtained for one of his tutors, Dr. Watson, the bishopric of Llandaff; for another, Dr. Sparke, the see, first of Chester, then of Ely. Pitt's tutor, Tomline, was Bishop of Lincoln; Perceval's, Mansel, Bishop of Bristol. Fisher, Bishop of Salisbury, had been tutor to the Duke of Kent; Howley, Bishop of London, had been

The Bishops.

[1] The debates on the bill will be found in *Hansard*, first series, vol. iv. p. 611; vol. v. pp. 154, 737; vol. vi. pp. 741, 922; vol. xi. pp. 54, 833, 1114.

[2] Alison, vol. i. p. 444.

CHAP. II.

regius professor of divinity at Oxford; Jackson, Bishop of Oxford, had been regius professor of Greek. Burgess, Bishop of St. David's, had been chaplain to Shute Barrington, Bishop of Durham. Majendie, Bishop of Bangor, had been the king's neighbour at Kew. The list exhausts twenty-one out of the twenty-six prelates living in 1815. It is probably possible to extend it still further. But, as it stands, it sufficiently reveals the state of the Church. Birth, interest, and scholarship the sole passports to the bench. The ordinary parish clergyman, who stayed at home and attended to his duties, with little or no chance of ecclesiastical advancement!

Abuses of ecclesiastical patronage.

A bench of bishops thus constituted was more likely to attend to their own interests than to the affairs of the Church. When Wilberforce moved for the promotion of Christianity in India, he specially complained that the bishops, as a body, gave him no support.[1] The bishops were, in fact, too much occupied in attending to the interests of their children, to think of such distant subjects as Christianity in India. Archbishop Sutton was a very good man; he made an estimable primate; and there is no reason to suppose that he abused the patronage at his disposal more than the rest of his contemporaries. But, wrote the editor of the 'Black Book,' 'the late Archbishop Sutton is an eminent instance of the perversion of ecclesiastical patronage. The Suttons remaining in the Church are very numerous; among seven of them are shared sixteen rectories, vicarages, and chapelries, besides preacherships and dignities in cathedrals. Of the eleven daughters[2] of the archbishop, several had the prudence to marry men in holy orders. Hugh Percy, son of the Earl of Beverley, married one daughter; and, in the course of about as many years, was portioned off with eight different preferments, estimated to be worth about

[1] Wilberforce, vol. ii. p. 28.

[2] The editor has slightly coloured his story. Archbishop Sutton left nine daughters, three of whom were married to clergymen.

10,000*l.* per annum. Another daughter married the Rev. James Croft, who is archdeacon of Canterbury, prebendary of Canterbury, curate of Hythe, rector of Cliffe at Hone—all preferments in the gift of the archbishop.' Pitt's tutor, Tomline, made Archbishop Sutton's conduct appear moderate. One of his sons, G. T. Prttyman, became 'chancellor and canon residentiary of Lincoln, prebendary of Winchester, rector of St. Giles Chalfont, rector of Wheat-Hampstead, rector of Harpenden. Another son, Richard Pretyman, became precentor and canon residentiary of Lincoln, rector of Middleton-Stoney, rector of Walgrave, vicar of Hannington, and rector of Wroughton. A third son, John Pretyman, became prebendary of Lincoln, rector of Sherrington, rector of Winwick. Bishop Sparke had an equally keen eye for his children's interests. His eldest son, the Rev. J. Henry Sparke, became incumbent of Leverington, rector of Littlebury, incumbent of Bexwell, prebendary of Ely, steward of the bishop's manorial courts, and chancellor of the diocese. His preferments were estimated to be worth 4,500*l.* a year. His youngest son, the Rev. Edward Sparke, succeeded to the consolidated livings of St. Mary and St. Nicholas Feltwell, the vicarage of Littleport, and a prebendal stall in Ely. He was also registrar of the diocese and examining chaplain to his father. His various appointments were worth 4,000*l.* a year. Finally, the bishop's son-in-law, the Rev. Henry Fardell, succeeded to the living of Waterbeach, the vicarage of Wisbech, and a prebendal stall in Ely. His preferments were worth 3,700*l.* a year.[1]

Pluralities, however, were not enjoyed by bishops' sons alone. It is said that Majendie, Bishop of Bangor, held no fewer than eleven parochial preferments.[2] Mr. Wright, in his letters to the 'Morning Chronicle,' in 1814, undertook to prove that, 'in one diocese there are about

[1] *Black Book*, vol. vi. pp. 25-27.

[2] Ibid. p. 31.

CHAP. II.

two hundred and sixteen clergymen who each hold two livings; forty who hold three each; thirteen who hold four each; one who holds five; one who holds six, besides dignities and offices.'[1]

The country clergymen.

Such a system could not work well. When benefices were popularly supposed to be the means of providing for a near relation; when the greater part of the emoluments attached to a living were diverted into another parish to support a non-resident clergyman; the clergy could not be expected to entertain any very exalted notions of the duties of their profession. Good men, no doubt, there were in abundance. Gentlemen, struggling on a scanty salary to provide for the spiritual and temporal wants of the people entrusted to their care. Gentlemen providing out of their wealth vast sums for charitable purposes. But the ordinary clergyman had no such disposition. He was usually a sportsman, and, during six out of the seven days of the week, he passed his time in hunting, shooting, or fishing. He was generally not merely a sportsman, but a very keen one. The country squires had other duties to attend to; the country clergyman had nothing to do but shoot or fish. He was frequently the hardest rider, the best shot, and the keenest fisherman in the parish. Nothing interfered with his sport except an occasional funeral: and he left the field or the covert, and read the funeral service with his white surplice barely concealing his shooting or hunting dress. The people were so accustomed to conduct of this kind that they saw nothing indecent in it. All that they expected of their clergyman was that he should read service and preach on Sundays, and that he should perform the occasional functions, which he was required to discharge, on week days. The rest of his time was at his own disposal; and there was nothing in the public opinion of the day which prevented him from spending it in the same way as his squire.

[1] *Black Book*, pp. 31 and 36.

The picture may seem overdrawn: but it was painted in even stronger colours by a contemporary artist. Crabbe described the parish priest, in the 'Village,' as,

> A jovial youth, who thinks his Sunday task
> As much as God or man can fairly ask:
> The rest he gives to loves and labours light,
> To fields the morning, and to feasts the night.
> None better skilled the noisy pack to guide,
> To urge their chase, to cheer them or to chide.
> A sportsman keen, he shoots through half the day,
> And, skilled at whist, devotes the night to play.

Crabbe, indeed, after he had himself taken orders, naturally drew the clergy in more pleasing colours. The vicar in the 'Borough' is a much more estimable character than the jovial youth in the 'Village.' Old Dibble, the sexton in the 'Parish Register,' moreover, gives an account of all the clergymen whom he had remembered, and it is fair to add that there was not a sportsman among them. 'Addle,' the first, was a sleepy old don; 'Peele,' the second, screwed up the tithes; Grandspear, the third, was liberal and rich; the fourth was an author; the fifth a consumptive young gentleman from Cambridge. The reader concludes that the village was in private patronage; the parish a college living.

Church supremacy.

If the bishops did little to improve the position of the clergy, their influence was at any rate sufficient to maintain the supremacy of the Church. Since the days of Charles II. no one had been eligible for a seat in Parliament, or for any office either in the State or a Municipality, who did not first receive the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, and take the oaths of allegiance, supremacy, and abjuration. The Test Act, which excluded nonconformists from offices in the State, had originally been framed to deprive the Roman Catholics of power. But its effect had been wider than its originators had intended. It had been designed to exclude the Roman

CHAP. II.

Catholics from all authority. It had the effect of disabling all Protestant dissenters from legally holding office in the government of the country. Even those scrupulous individuals, who were ready to admit the doctrines of the Church, but who had conscientious objections to taking any oath whatever, were excluded from all offices by this unjust law. The whole system of government turned on the supremacy of the Church; and no one was allowed to have any practical influence in the affairs of the state except a churchman.

The supremacy, which the Church had thus obtained, was felt in almost every phase of life. The dissenter had to register his place of worship with the archbishop or bishop of the diocese. The dissenting minister was precluded from celebrating the marriage service; no funeral service, except that prescribed by the Church, could be read over the dead; the Church service was confined to those who had been baptised in the Church of England. A Roman Catholic or a dissenter could not send his sons to the University. All the great charitable endowments for educational purposes were under the control of clergymen, but the dissenters were rated for the support of the churches. No one but a churchman could easily obtain an education for his children; no one but a churchman could hope for advancement in the public service. The highest legal authority of the day was of opinion that it was penal to deny the doctrine of the Trinity.[1] Yet the men, who thus denied the commonest privileges of humanity to a large number of their fellow subjects, were ready enough to condemn similar intolerance when it was practised towards themselves. Every well-educated English gentleman must have read, and no English gentleman could have read without admiring, the passionate description of 'Narcissa's' secret burial in Young's 'Night Thoughts.'

[1] Twiss' *Eldon*, vol. ii. p. 513.

Turn, hopeless thought! turn from her, . . .
Snatched ere thy prime, and in thy bridal hour;
. . . .
And on a foreign shore where strangers wept,
Strangers to thee, and, more surprising still,
Strangers to kindness, wept; their eyes let fall
Inhuman tears: strange tears! that trickled down
From marble hearts! obdurate tenderness!
. . . .
While nature melted, superstition failed:
That mourned the dead, and this denied a grave.
. . . .
For O, the cursed ungodliness of zeal!
While sinful flesh relented, spirit nursed
In blind infallibility's embrace,
The sainted spirit petrified the breast;
Denied the charity of dust, to spread
O'er dust! a charity their dogs enjoy.

The Church, which denied the superstition of Rome, was almost as intolerant as that which was 'nursed in blind infallibility's embrace.'

Such was the state of the Church in England at the period at which this history commences. The supremacy of one persuasion had a natural effect. A few old families were hereditary Roman Catholics. A considerable minority among the poorer classes were dissenters. But the mass of the community embraced the only creed which gave them their full rights as citizens. Every man who had any ambition to satisfy, or any children to provide for, adopted the only religion which enabled him to gratify his own wishes, or give his sons a chance. It was the clear interest of all persons to be churchmen; it was 'ungentlemanlike' to be a dissenter. Such was the state of things in England. But in Ireland the result was very different. There, the supremacy of the Church was regarded as the mark of foreign conquest. There, the great majority of the population were devout Roman Catholics. There, public opinion despised the Protestant minority and ranged itself under the banners of the

CHAP. II.

Church of Rome. The time was fast approaching when the discontent, which was in consequence produced, was to destroy the supremacy to which statesmen still fondly clung. It will however be more convenient to defer to a future chapter the further consideration of the effects which the supremacy of the Protestant Church were producing in Ireland.

Wages.

The country gentlemen, it has already been shown, had benefited from the rise in the price of corn; rents had risen, and their incomes had in consequence increased. The clergy had shared in the gain which had thus been obtained. They were dependent to a very great extent on tithes, and the value of the tithe—the tenth of the produce—rose of course with the value of the produce itself. The great proportion of the population, however, had no interest either in rents or tithes. They were dependent for their bread on their labour; and, as the price of bread continually rose, and the value of their labour did not rise in a corresponding degree, they were perpetually becoming more and more impoverished. Skilled artisans at the commencement of the present century might have earned their thirty shillings a week; but an ordinary day labourer usually received nine or ten shillings. Occasionally, indeed, wages sank to a lower level. Harvest wages in 1798 in North Wales were only 1*s.* or 14*d.* a day. The amount was miserably insufficient, when the price of wheat had averaged, as it had before 1800, less than 60*s.* a quarter. But the price of wheat rose in 1800 to 113*s.* 10*d.*; in 1802 to 119*s.* 6*d.*; and, though it fell in succeeding years, and only averaged about 60*s.* in 1803 and 1804, it rose again to 126*s.* in 1812.[1] The high price was hardly more serious to the labourer than the variations in price. Bread formed his chief food, and in one year the quartern loaf was purchasable for 9*d.*, in another it could not be ob-

[1] See the Tables in McCulloch's *Dict.* sub verb. Corn Laws.

tained for less than 1*s.* 6*d.*[1] How could any man, much less an uneducated man, provide against fluctuations of this description, occurring without warning, and through no fault of his own? Nothing but an increased wage for his labour could have served the labourer; and, unfortunately, the vast addition to the price of corn tended to make the wage-rate decline. 'I wished,' said a landowner to a Committee of the House of Lords in 1814, 'to enclose a farm at the latter end of the year 1812 or the beginning of 1813. I sent for my bailiff and told him that I had enclosed, about twenty-five years ago, a good deal of land; that the enclosure at that time cost me 3*s.* per ell; that a neighbour of mine, two or three years ago, had made similar enclosures, which cost him 5*s.* per ell; that I thought he had paid too much, and that I ought to do it cheaper. The answer I got from my bailiff was that provisions were very high, that the labourers were doing double work, and that, of course, there was less demand for labour, and that he could do these enclosures last year at a cheaper rate than I had ever done them, and he actually executed this enclosure at about 2*s.* 6*d.* per ell. He requested that I would allow him to do it that season as he could do it so much cheaper, and that a great many labourers were idle from having little work, in consequence of those employed doing double work. I desired him to go on with other labour likewise, and he actually contracted for very large ditches at 6*d.* an ell, which I do not think I could do now under from 1*s.* to 1*s.* 6*d.*, in consequence of the fall in provisions.'[2] The most frightful distress was, in consequence, almost universally prevalent. 'The state of the poor in Bethnal Green,' to quote the words of Mr. King, the rector of that parish in 1816, 'is truly wretched; the house is overflowing with poor. I believe that they

Distress.

[1] This was about the average price. The quartern loaf rose in 1801 to 1*s.* 10½*d.*

[2] See the evidence quoted in Porter's *Progress of the Nation*, p. 455.

CHAP. II.

are at this time crowded together in beds, and that there are as many as six or seven in a bed. The men and women are in separate wards, that is the only distinction which can be made. The master of the workhouse has declared to me that the house is not capable of containing more than 350, but I believe at the present moment there are 700.'[1] 'My views of the state of England,' wrote Lord Grey in 1819, 'are more and more gloomy. Everything is tending, and has for some time been tending, to a complete separation between the higher and lower orders of society, a state of things which can only end in the destruction of liberty, or in a convulsion which may too probably produce the same result.'[2]

> No—in countries that are free
> Such starvation cannot be,
> As in England now we see,

wrote Shelley in the same year. 'I have traversed the seat of war in the Peninsula, I have been in some of the most oppressed provinces of Turkey; but never, under the most despotic of infidel governments, have I beheld such squalid wretchedness as I have seen, since my return, in the heart of a Christian country,' said Byron in the House of Lords in 1812.

The distress, which thus prevailed, was no doubt enhanced by the artificial addition made to the price of corn from the existence of the corn laws. But it originated in other causes. For nearly three centuries a law, humane in its origin, but abused in its administration, had compelled every parish to provide for the maintenance of its infirm poor, and to put 'to work all persons using no ordinary and daily trade in life to get their living by.' Had this law been wisely and humanely carried out, the best results would have ensued from it.

The Poor Laws.

[1] Rev. Joshua King's evidence; Report on Police of Metropolis, 1816, p. 155.

[2] Brougham's *Memoirs*, vol. ii. p. 342.

But its administration by local persons displayed little humanity and less wisdom. Pauperism was created by the most indiscriminate and lavish grants of outdoor relief, and the aged and infirm paupers were crowded in the utmost discomfort into the house. The poorhouse, in which the permanent paupers were crowded, was utterly unsuited for its purpose. No attempt was made to classify the inmates; no attempt was made to provide the commonest appliances for ensuring health, warmth, or decency.

> Theirs is yon house, that holds the parish poor,
> Whose walls of mud scarce bear the broken door;
> There, where the putrid vapours flagging play,
> And the dull wheel hums doleful through the day.
> . . . . .
> Such is that room which one rude beam divides,
> And naked rafters form the sloping sides:
> Where the vile bands that bind the thatch are seen,
> And lath and mud are all that lie between,
> Save one dull pane, that, coarsely patched, gives way
> To the rude tempest, yet excludes the day.[1]

Happily, however, for themselves, it was only a small minority of the paupers who had the misfortune to live in the poor-house. The vast mass of the population, paupers in the strict sense of the term, resided in their own wretched cottages. The administrators of the poor law were employers of labour. Their chief object in administering the law was to reduce the price of labour, and their whole efforts were, intentionally or unintentionally, directed to this end. Wages, being reduced to the minimum at which life could be supported under any circumstances, were supplemented in years of distress, or in the case of large families, by out-door relief. A large family seemed, in consequence, an object to every working man, and the prudential considerations, which might have induced the poor to abstain from matrimony, were

[1] Crabbe's *Village*, Book I.

CHAP. II.

removed. 'Under such a system a labourer in an agricultural district was inevitably rendered a pauper; he was deprived of all means for exercising the virtue of prudence, and became almost necessarily improvident; he was brought to look upon the parish allowance as his freehold. . . and at seasons when it no longer suited the farmer to give employment, the whole labouring part of the population might be, and often was, thrown upon the rates.'[1]

> Our poor how feed we? to the most we give
> A weekly dole.[2]

The extravagance which was one result of this system was only one of the evils which was occasioned by it. During the reign of George II., 'the amount raised within the year of poor rates and county rates in England and Wales was only 730,000*l.* In 1775 the amount was more than doubled, having been 1,720,000*l.*, of which sum rather more than a million and a half was expended for the relief of the poor. The War of American Independence . . . crippled the resources of the people and aggravated the distresses of the poor. From that time to the close of the last French war in 1814, the sums levied in poor rates were in a state of continued progression. The average sum expended for the relief of the poor in the three years from 1812–13 to 1814–15 amounted to 6,123,177*l.*'[3] It was incidentally stated in the House of Commons in 1828 that there were 1,040,000 persons in receipt of relief in 1801; 1,340,000 in 1811; and, 1,500,000 in 1821. It was estimated that the number had risen to 1,700,000 in 1826; and 1,850,000 in 1827.[4]

Settlement.

The burden, which had thus been rapidly thrown on the rates, was so vast that the ratepayers naturally endeavoured to relieve themselves as far as possible from

[1] Porter's *Progress*, pp. 90, 91. [2] Crabbe's *Borough*, Letter XVIII.
[3] Porter's *Progress of the Nation*, p. 86.
[4] *Hansard*, New Series, vol. xviii. p. 1527.

its pressure. No one parish, indeed, had machinery at its disposal for reducing the aggregate weight of pauperism, but every parish endeavoured to shift as much of the burden as possible on to its neighbour. The burden, so it seemed to the narrow understanding of the country vestrymen, could be most easily shifted off their own shoulders by enforcing the law of settlement. No provision was made, in the reign of Elizabeth, when the poor laws were originally instituted, for ascertaining the place of settlement of the indigent poor. The great principles, which Parliament then laid down, were that the lame, the impotent, the old, and the blind should receive necessary relief, and that the idle and the vagabond should be set to work. It was not till after the Restoration that a settlement was first thought of. The short reign of Charles II. will be always memorable for the selfish legislation passed in it. It was in the reign of Charles II. that protection first became a reality; it was in the reign of Charles II. that the navigation laws were re-enacted; it was in the reign of Charles II. that a Parliament of landlords replaced their own feudal burdens with an excise; it was in the reign of Charles II. that religious disabilities were introduced; it was in the reign of Charles II. that the poor were for the first time settled.[1]

The legislators of 1662 declared that the number of the poor had become very great and burthensome, and that the burthen was due to the defects in the law concerning the settling of the poor. 'Whereas by reason of some defects in the law, poor people are not restrained from going from one parish to another, and therefore do endeavour to settle themselves in those parishes where there is the best stock . . . it shall and may be lawful for any two justices of the peace to remove or convey such person or persons to the last parish wherein they were legally settled.' The effects of this statute were

[1] For the opposite view, see *Hist. of Civilization*, vol. i. p. 381.

CHAP. II.

very mischievous. The poor, in an imperfect fashion, were endeavouring to accommodate themselves to the great law of demand and supply, and to repair to the parishes where their labour was most required. The legislature stepped in, and insisted on their remaining in the miserable localities in which they had been born. The rich man might employ his capital in any industry and in any locality; the poor man might not remove his labour from the narrow circle in which his hard lot had been cast.[1]

Parish Apprentices.

If, however, the overseers of rural parishes resented the influx of poor people into their little dominions, they were only too glad to get rid of the children of their own poor. At the period at which this history opens, no person could practise any trade unless he had previously served a seven years' apprenticeship. In the great majority of cases apprenticeships were voluntary contracts, between the father of a child on one side, and the employer on the other. And to these apprenticeships there was usually no objection. The father might generally be trusted with the selection of a kind master for his son, and the lad ran no more risk of ill-treatment than if he had been sent to school. But there was another class of apprentices much less fortunately situated. The parish had the right to apprentice the children of poor parents to any trade, and the master was compelled to receive the apprentices.[2] Children under this law might be sent to the most distant parts of the kingdom.

[1] By the Act of Charles II. a poor person could get a settlement after 40 days' residence. But by a law in the next reign it was enacted that such settlement should not count unless notice had been given in writing to the parish overseers. An Act of William III. further enacted that such notice should be published in the church and registered. An Act of 1795 forbade the removal of any poor person until he became actually chargeable; but re-enacted all the other old conditions of settlement, and declared that no settlement should be gained by the payment of poor-rates on any tenement rented at less than 10*l.* a year. There is a good description of these Acts in *Hansard*, N.S., vol. ix. p. 695.

[2] Warren's *Blackstone*, p. 361.

'It is a very common practice,' wrote Romilly in 1811, 'with the great populous parishes in London, to bind children in large numbers to the proprietors of cotton mills in Lancashire and Yorkshire, at a distance of 200 miles. The children, who are sent off by waggon-loads at a time, are as much lost for ever to their parents as if they were shipped off for the West Indies. The parishes that bind them, by procuring a settlement for the children at the end of forty days, get rid of them for ever, and the poor children have not a human being in the world to whom they can look up for redress against the wrongs they may be exposed to from these wholesale dealers in them, whose object it is to get everything that they can possibly wring from their excessive labour and fatigue.'[1] 'Instances (and not very few) have occurred in our criminal tribunals of wretches who have murdered their parish apprentices, that they might get fresh premiums with new apprentices.'[2] The manufacturers, it is shocking to state, agreed to take one idiot for every nineteen sane children.[3] The sufferings, which these poor children endured, hardly admit of relation. There were no laws to regulate infant labour: there were no laws to insure either their education, their health, or their good treatment. Children commonly commenced to work at the age of seven; they occasionally began work at five. Their ordinary labour lasted for fifteen hours a day, and was not rarely extended to seventeen.[4] 'Little creatures,' said Sir Robert Peel, in 1816, 'torn from their beds, were compelled to work, at the age of six years, from early morn till late at night, a space of perhaps fifteen to sixteen hours.'[5] The children were little better than slaves, and their condition was more deplorable because their services were less valuable. Those,

[1] Romilly, vol. ii. p. 372.
[2] Ibid. p. 373.
[3] *Hansard*, vol. xxxiii. p. 886.
[4] Yonge's *Life of Lord Liverpool* vol. ii. p. 368.
[5] *Hansard*, vol. xxxiii. p. 884.

CHAP. II.

who have ever read an account of the cruelties perpetrated on every child apprenticed to a chimney-sweeper, will appreciate the wail of infant suffering which was rising from every parish in the kingdom.

It is shocking to relate that humane men, advanced in their views, and thoroughly conversant with the evils which they defended, advocated the continuance of the system. In the opinion of the first Sir Robert Peel,[1] who had raised himself to wealth and honour from a humble situation, it was highly unjust to prevent a man from taking as many apprentices as he thought proper; the children from London were boys educated in picking pockets, and it was the happiest thing possible for them to be removed from their former connections. Another member of Parliament, Mr. Wortley, whose acquaintance with the subject must have been nearly as great as that of Sir Robert Peel, 'insisted that, although in the higher ranks of society it was true that to cultivate the affections of children for their family was the source of every virtue, yet that it was not so among the lower orders, and that it was a benefit to the children to take them away from their miserable and depraved parents. It would too be highly injurious to the public to put a stop to the binding so many apprentices to the cotton manufacturers, as it must necessarily raise the price of labour and enhance the price of cotton manufactured goods.'[2] The mania for cheap labour was blinding men's eyes, and reconciling them to evils from which their better feelings would have otherwise revolted.

Poor Law Discipline

If, however, the lot of the apprentice was hard, that of their parents who remained at home was equally hard. In theory, indeed, the pauper was entitled to as

[1] It is only fair to add that Sir Robert Peel was in favour of factory legislation, and was instrumental in passing the first Factory Act, 59 Geo. III. c. 66, forbidding the employment of children under nine years of age, and limiting the hours of work to twelve a day.

[2] Romilly, vol. ii. p. 393.

much humane treatment as any other subject of the crown. But, in practice, hard legislation, drawn by local officers, introduced without reflection and passed without consideration, sanctioned the use by overseers of the most inhuman treatment. A measure was passed in 1810, which purported to be a bill for paving, lighting, and cleansing the growing town of Brighthelmstone (Brighton), but which absolutely enabled the assistant overseer of the parish 'to punish any person, received into the workhouse, who shall be guilty of using any abusive or improper language, with solitary confinement for forty-eight hours:' and which empowered 'any five of the directors or guardians, without any proof, or examination on oath, to imprison and keep to hard labour for fourteen days, any person who shall be found wandering or committing any act of vagrancy in the parish!' In the same session an Act, passed for regulating the poor in the parish of St. George the Martyr, Southwark, empowered any one churchwarden or overseer to cause any children under the age of fifteen who shall be found wandering in the parish, to be sent to the workhouse, and detained there till they attained the age of fifteen; and to cause 'any person, who shall be found wandering or begging, or committing any act of vagrancy or riot, to be sent to the workhouse and detained there as long as the churchwardens and overseers shall direct.' Another Act, in the same session, enabled any seven of the trustees of St. Paul's, Shadwell, to send any children found wandering in the parish, whom they shall judge to be under the age of fourteen, to the workhouse, to be detained there till they (the trustees) shall judge that they are of the age of twenty-one; and it enabled the same number of trustees to send any person, who shall be found to misbehave himself, to the workhouse, there to be detained and employed as long as they shall think

CHAP. II.

proper, and to be subject to the same punishments as the other poor in the workhouse.[1]

But a still more extraordinary measure was introduced in 1811. 'I opposed,' wrote Romilly, 'a bill for regulating the poor of Spilsby and nineteen adjoining parishes in the county of Lincoln, on account of some extraordinary penal clauses contained in it. One of these clauses empowered the master of the poorhouse to punish any of the poor maintained in it, for what he might deem misbehaviour, with solitary confinement, and that without limit; another made the offence of damaging the house, after it should be erected, or any of the fences about it, felony; a third enabled the directors of the poor to let out the paupers, by the day or the week, to any persons they might think proper, to labour for them; and a fourth empowered the overseers of the poor of any parish in the county of Lincoln, to contract with the directors of the poor of Spilsby for the maintenance of their poor; and enacted that, upon such contract being entered into, the poor of all such parishes should be transferred to the house of industry at Spilsby, and be there subject to the same punishments and regulations as the poor of Spilsby.' It is a striking illustration of the carelessness, with which measures of this character were introduced, that the members responsible for the bill were not acquainted with the nature of these clauses; that the member who moved the second reading was ignorant of them; that no person in the House knew that there were any such clauses in the bill, and that but for an accidental circumstance it would have been passed as a matter of course.[2] Five years afterwards, indeed, or in 1816, a Lincoln poor bill was still in force which gave the guardians power to dispose of a child, who had once been in receipt of relief, as they thought proper; and to inflict corporal punishment.[3]

[1] Romilly, pp. 377–379.
[2] Ibid. pp. 375, 376.
[3] *Hansard*, vol. xxxiii. p. 850.

Such was the character of the legislation, which at the commencement of the present century, was thought good enough for paupers. If a man had the misfortune to be poor, he was liable to be confined for an indefinite period at the instance of parochial officers responsible to no one: he was liable to see his children forcibly removed from him, and sent to places which were for all practical purposes as distant as the West Indies; to know that they would, on their arrival at their destination, be as much at the mercy of their masters as a negro slave; and that they would grow up without instruction, without advice, without assistance from any one.

Criminals and the Penal Code.

The hardship and the injustice, which such a system inflicted on the poor, is not capable of exaggeration. But it is very doubtful whether the poor themselves suffered more severely from it than the rich. When a pauper was treated as a criminal, crime seemed no greater offence than poverty; and a poor man, with nothing but a workhouse and a prison to choose between, might think the prison the preferable evil of the two. During the latter years of the war, crime increased with a rapidity, which ought to have startled legislators into adopting some new measures for preventing it. In 1805, 4,605 persons were committed for trial; 2,783 were convicted; 350 of these were sentenced to death, and 68 were executed. In 1810, 5,146 persons were committed for trial; 3,158 were convicted; 476 were sentenced to death, and 67 were executed. In 1815, 7,818 persons were committed for trial; 4,883 were convicted; 553 persons were sentenced to death, and 57 were executed.[1] In ten years, then, the committals rose from 4,605 to 7,818; the covnictions from 2,783 to 4,883; the sentences to death from 350 to 553; while the executions

[1] Porter's *Progress of the Nation*, p. 642.

CHAP. II.

decreased from 68 to 57.[1] Deplorable as was the increase of crime during the war to which these figures pointed, its growth was much more lamentable after the conclusion of peace. Four years afterwards, or in 1819, 14,254 persons were committed for trial; 9,510 were convicted; 1,314 were sentenced to death, and 108 were executed. The first thing which must strike every reflecting mind on seeing these figures, is the extraordinary increase in the amount of crime; the second, the utter uncertainty of detecting it. Out of every 100 persons who were committed to trial, 33 had a reasonable prospect of acquittal; out of every hundred persons who were sentenced to death, 92 were not executed.

The uncertainty, which undoubtedly encouraged the growth of crime, arose from a very natural and a very pardonable notion. The legislature had the folly to imagine that the best way of repressing crime was to give the suspected criminal no chance, and to punish the convict with the utmost severity. At the time at which this history commences, the counsel of a man charged with felony was not allowed to address the jury in the prisoner's defence;[2] and the commonest offences were, at that time, felonies. The least influential member of Parliament had sufficient power to have any offence made a capital felony, without benefit of clergy.[3] In 1815 it was a capital offence to steal goods to the value of 5*s.* in a shop. It was a capital offence to steal 40*s.* from a dwelling-

[1] These fifty-seven suffered for the following crimes:—Murder and intent to murder, sixteen; burglary, ten; forgery, eleven; robbery from the person, seven; rape, seven; sheep stealing, three; arson, one; horse stealing, one; unnatural offence, one. See Metropolitan Police Report, 1828, p. 286.

[2] Arnould's *Denman*, vol. i. pp. 225, 243, 250; *Hansard*, N. S. vol. xi. p. 219.

[3] All felonies, except sacrilege and horse stealing, were up to 1827 felonies with benefit of clergy, provided the same were not expressly excepted by statute. But, as in practice they always were excepted, the law was a mere mockery. Felons were only entitled once to benefit of clergy, which was, practically, very similar to the 'first fault' with which many public school boys are familiar. *Hansard*, vol. xvii. p. 936; Kerr's *Blackstone*, vol. iv. p. 95.

house. It was a capital offence to break frames. It was made a capital offence in 1816 to destroy machines. It was a capital offence to steal a horse or sheep. Up to 1808 it had been a capital offence to pick a man's pocket. Up to 1812 it had been a capital offence for soldiers and mariners to beg. It was seriously proposed in 1813 to punish the fraudulent debtor with death. 'There are no less than 200 felonies,' said Mackintosh in 1819, 'punishable with death.' Burke once told Mackintosh that, although from his political career he was not entitled to ask any favour of the ministry, he was persuaded he had interest enough at any time to obtain their assent to a felony without benefit of clergy. So easy was it for any one to obtain an addition to the long category of capital felonies. It became in fact necessary to distinguish the higher class of offences with an even greater punishment than death. The ordinary felon, who was hanged, was entitled to be buried. The murderer's body was devoted to anatomy.[1] These severe laws had the natural effect. Informers prosecuted for the sake of the reward which followed the conviction; but ordinary persons hesitated to prosecute an offence which might be punished with death. James Platt, a Manchester police constable, acknowledged, on the Peterloo trial, that he had been in the habit of inveigling persons into the uttering of forged notes for the purpose of convicting them; and that he had succeeded in hanging one man in this way.[2] 'Our murderous laws,' wrote Wilberforce,[3] 'prevent prosecutions and often harden convicts' hearts.' 'John Bull,' wrote Hazlitt, 'boasts of the excellence of the laws, and the goodness of his disposition; and yet there are more people hanged in England than in all Europe besides.'[4]

The severity of the penal code acted as a direct encouragement to the criminal. Juries declined to convict

[1] Colchester, vol. i. p. 41.
[2] *Ann. Reg.* vol. lxii. p. 860.
[3] Wilberforce, vol. iv. p. 370.
[4] *The Round Table*, p. 126.

CHAP. II.

an unfortunate individual of a trifling offence, when conviction might entail the loss of the offender's life; and prisoners were consequently acquitted, not because they were innocent, but because the punishment assignable to the offence was, in the opinion of the country, too severe. A jury, moreover, could never be certain that the judge would not form a much harsher opinion of the case than that with which they themselves were disposed to regard it. Lord Eldon used to defend the retention of a capital punishment for minor crimes because it enabled the judges to rid the world of offenders whom they fancied hardened. 'A man was indicted for stealing a horse of the small value of seven shillings and sixpence, and which he had sold for that sum to a horse-butcher. The jury found him guilty,' and Lord Eldon allowed him to be hanged; not because he thought the single offence deserved so severe a punishment, but because the man had in his possession skeleton keys of all the turnpike gates near London. In other words, a circumstance, which the jury had not investigated, and for which the prisoner had not been tried, cost the man his life.[1]

Reasons of this character induced Parliament to refuse to listen to every plea for moderation, and to treat with contempt every proposal for the reform of the penal code. 'We have our professors of humanity like Robespierre,' wrote the 'Quarterly Review,' in 1816,[2] 'who propose the abolition of capital punishment.' When it was desired to make transportation for life the punishment of stealing five shillings in a shop, 'the twelve judges stepped down from their pedestals, and through Lord Ellenborough, then Chief Justice of England, favoured the House of Lords, for the first time, with an unasked opinion, not of law, but of legislation, protesting against any abridgment of their powers of life and death.'[3]

[1] Twiss' *Eldon*, vol. ii. p. 121.

[2] *Quarterly Review* of July 1816, p. 574, quoted in Arnould's *Denman*, vol. i. p. 253.

[3] Denman, vol. i. p. 253, and vol. ii. p. 320.

Humane people, in and out of Parliament, were constantly protesting againgst the severity of the code which the peers and the judges were resolutely bent on maintaining. But humane people might almost have been excused for doubting whether death was not a kinder punishment than the alternative which could be substituted for it. The felon, who was not hanged, was either transported or condemned to hard labour. Transportation was regarded with very different feelings by different classes of convicts. To a woman transportation meant ruin. During the voyage the female convicts notoriously lived in shameless intercourse with the sailors. Nine out of every ten, after their arrival in New South Wales, supported themselves by prostitution.[1] Unmarried men, on the contrary, welcomed the sentence. 'The generality of those who are transported,' said Mr. Cotton, the ordinary at Newgate, 'consider it as a party of pleasure, or going out to see the world; they evince no penitence or contrition, but seem to rejoice in the thing; many of them court transportation.'[2] The prisoners, added a constant visitor to the same prison, 'rejoice in the prospect of transportation, and it is with the greatest difficulty in the world that that spirit can be restrained. When they go off they are shouting and rejoicing as though some great achievement had been performed.'[3] It was stated in the House of Commons in 1816 that there were hundreds of candidates for transportation to Botany Bay on the hulks.[4] Married men, indeed, regarded the punishment with different feelings; and the despair which they displayed at their separation from their families, proved that they were not wholly destitute of the best of feelings. Men and even women were known to commit crimes in the hope that they might be sent to follow their husbands

Convict and Prisons.

[1] *Hansard*, vol. xxxix. pp. 1435, 1439.
[2] Report Metropolitan Police, 1818, p. 171.
[3] Ibid. p. 178.
[4] *Hansard*, vol. xxxiii. p. 988.

CHAP. II.

or their wives to Australasia. One wretched woman, who suffered death in 1815, was induced to commit the offence for which she died, from her great yearning to see her husband, who had been transported for the same felony. But the judge thought it proper 'to make an example' of the unhappy creature; and she atoned by her death on the gallows for her exceeding love for her husband![1]

If, however, transportation were welcomed by one class of criminals, going to the hulks, or the punishment of seven years' hard labour, was universally dreaded. The severity of the toil had much to do with this dread. But it is hardly possible for a modern mind to realise the horrors which were inseparable sixty years ago from a long imprisonment. The metropolis represented the wealth of the country; the metropolitan prisons were under the direct eye of the legislature. Abuses in Clerkenwell, or in the Bridewell[2] or Tothill Fields, were far more certain of exposure than abuses in a country town. The prisons in the metropolis were, then, at least as good and as well managed as those in any other part of the country. Yet the system, or rather want of system, which characterised their management, was deplorable. No attempt was made to classify the prisoners. Children of the tenderest age were suffered to herd with hardened felons. Women of the most abandoned nature were allowed to mingle with others who had been simply remanded. The debtor[3] and the felon shared the same

[1] The story is told by Mrs. Fry in her evidence to the Police Committee of 1818, p. 175.

[2] The original 'Bridewell' was the old palace near St. Bridget's or St. Bride's well, from whence it had its name. The name, after it became a prison, was applied to other prisons of the same sort, says Johnson. In the same way many local prisons are known as 'Newgates,' many local markets as 'Smithfields.'

[3] The creditor had originally power to inflict imprisonment on an insolvent. This, however, was altered by 28 Geo. II., c. 13. By this Act the debtor was entitled to his discharge on surrendering his property; but, where the debt exceeded 500*l.*, an objecting creditor had the right to detain him on paying 6*d.* a day. The gaols became so crowded that the legislature had to from time to time, to pass tempor-

yard, and perhaps slept in the same bed. Vice and misfortune, misery and crime, were all branded with the same mark, and condemned to the same fate. Three unhappy lunatics, committed in default of sureties for their good behaviour, were in constant intercourse with the felons in Coldbath Fields. A prisoner, so diseased and offensive as to be unfit for removal to the parish hospital, was permitted to remain and die in a miserable apartment, twenty-one feet by eleven; and in this wretched room twenty-four other persons slept. The innocent might be detained for months in this vicious atmosphere. There was no gaol delivery from Midsummer to Lent. A man might actually, therefore, suffer seven or eight months' imprisonment before he was brought to trial.[1]

There were indeed some small distinctions which relieved the universal gloom. A prisoner with means was allowed a few slight comforts which the utterly destitute were denied. In most of the metropolitan prisons beds were provided, with fairly clean linen, which prisoners were allowed to occupy for 1*s.* a night. For one-half of that sum a prisoner could obtain a share of a bed with some other inmate of the prison. Few prisoners, however, were able to afford the scanty comfort of a separate bed. The majority were confined in the ordinary yards and slept with the rest of the prisoners. Young and old, innocent and guilty, were mingled in the same

Acts to let out insolvents. In 1813 an amended Act constituting a new court made the property and not the person of the debtor answerable for the debt. Fraudulent debtors were, however, still liable to imprisonment, and anyone might depose on oath to a debt due from him; and the debtor could be arrested on what was known as mesne process. These depositions were occasionally made in spite. A debtor, who himself applied for relief, was a fraudulent debtor. See, inter alia, *Hansard*, vol. xl. p. 587; New Series, vol. xvii. p. 223; vol. xviii. p. 126; and vol. xx. p. 430. The debts of the persons discharged under the Act of 1813 during the first three years during which it was in operation amounted to 5,597,859*l.*; the assets to only 1,459*l.* *Hansard*, vol. xxxiii. p. 455.

[1] See Sutton Western's motion, in *Hansard*, vol. xl. p. 1067.

CHAP. II.

society and contaminated with the vicious atmosphere inseparable from such company.

The arrangement would have been sufficiently deplorable if the officers of every prison had been carefully selected. Unfortunately the wardsmen were usually prisoners themselves. They were almost all felons, and selected for their responsible duties, not from any sense of their worth, but for their good conduct within the prison. The most atrocious felon, with sufficient self-restraint to conform to the prison rules, was likely to become a warder; and, as a matter of fact, the Committee of 1818 found two persons, convicted of crimes of an infamous nature, invested with this authority. Men of all ages and of all dispositions, hardened ruffians and timid lads, were thus thrown together, and the worst among them were selected to maintain a nominal order, and to uphold the authority of the law. Theoretically, indeed, the convict felons were sentenced to hard labour, but in practice no labour was exacted from them. The time was spent, not in enforced labour, but in enforced idleness, and the hours were devoted to 'indecent and unseemly conversation.'[1]

Such a system could hardly be expected to produce any good results. The consequences to which it led were in the unanimous opinion of competent critics deplorable. 'The people were made worse in prison,' said the ordinary in Newgate; 'they go out better instructed in crime than they entered.' 'They quit Newgate,' said another witness, 'much worse characters than when they go in.' 'Most of the prisoners,' said the governor of Coldbath Fields prison, 'are as bad when they go out as they are when they come, and some a great deal worse.' 'The discipline of our prisons,' said the chaplain of the same establishment, 'corrupts five or ten to every one that it reforms.' These were not merely the opinions of interested persons

[1] Metropolitan Police Report, 1818, pp. 13, 14.

A Committee which sat in 1822 fully endorsed them and the increase of crime in the metropolis left no room for doubting their accuracy. In 1806, 889 persons were committed for trial at the Old Bailey; 1,413 persons were committed for trial in 1814. In 1815 there were 112 boys confined in the hulks. One of these miserable children, condemned to associate with the most depraved and dangerous offenders, was not eleven years old.[1]

Horrible as the system was, a ray of light had already penetrated the gloom which shrouded the prisons of the country. A humane man had devoted a life to the cause of prison reform; and attention had been forcibly directed to the existence of mismanagement and misery, which the world before had been only too ready to ignore. John Howard was born in 1726; he died in Russia, when he was sixty-four years of age, in 1790. His work was done in a century with which this history has no concern. The fruits of it were only being slowly gathered at the period at which this history opens. Howard's own misfortune first directed his attention to the misery of prisoners. Travelling from London to Lisbon during the Seven Years War, the vessel in which he was a passenger was captured by a French cruiser. Howard was thrown for some years into a French prison, and he thus experienced the misery which prisoners in all countries, whether guilty or unfortunate, had to endure. The recollection of what he had suffered induced him after his release to make a tour of enquiry into the management of English, Irish, Scotch, and Continental prisons. The facts which he collected during these enquiries were published in several works, and the public thus became acquainted with the defects of a system of which they had previously been profoundly ignorant. 'He has visited all Europe,' said Burke, 'not to survey the stateliness of temples, but to dive into the

John Howard.

[1] *Romilly*, vol. iii. p. 185. Police Report, 1818, pp. 81, 86, 172, 179.

CHAP. II.

depths of dungeons; to plunge into the infection of hospitals; to survey the mansions of sorrow and pain; to take the gauge and dimensions of misery, depression, and contempt; to remember the forgotten, to attend to the neglected; to visit the forsaken, and to compare and collate the distresses of all men in all countries.'[1]

The horrors, which Howard's tours disclosed, almost passed comprehension. A few examples will sufficiently illustrate a singularly painful subject. Chesterfield gaol was the property of the Duke of Portland. It consisted of one room, and a cellar, which had not been cleaned for months, beneath it. Howard found in it four miserable debtors. They had 'no allowance, no straw, no firing,' they were almost starved. The gaol at Ely was the property of the bishop. It had been out of repair, and the gaoler had secured the prisoners by chaining them down on their backs upon the floor. In 1782 Howard found two debtors in this gaol; the debt of the one amounted to 3*s.* 5½*d.*, the other was confined for a few shillings' costs and gaol fees. The Bridewell at Abingdon consisted of 'two dirty day-rooms and three offensive night-rooms; the straw, worn to dust, swarmed with vermin; no court, no water accessible to prisoners; the petty offenders were in irons, and at my last visit eight were women.' So horrible was the high gaol at Exeter, that the surgeon was excused by contract from attending any prisoner in the dungeons that had the gaol fever. The prison at Penzance was the property of Lord Arundel. The men's room was 11 feet square by 6 feet high. It had one window, 18 inches square. In this room Howard found a miserable debtor. 'The door,' he added, 'had not been opened for four weeks when I went in, and then the keeper began to clear away the dirt.' In many prisons the prisoners' allowance of bread was regulated not by weight but by price. At Guildford in

[1] Burke, at Bristol, in 1780, quoted in *Pop. Encycl.*, ad verb. Howard

Surrey, at Southwell in Nottinghamshire, for instance, the prisoners were allowed three-halfpennyworth of bread a day. At some times 17 oz. and at others only 12 oz. of bread could be purchased for three halfpence. At most prisons a new prisoner was compelled to pay garnish, footing, or chummage; in other words to find drink for the other prisoners. 'Pay or strip,' was the demand made of him, and, as the gaol tap was usually kept by the gaolers, the gaolers were interested in maintaining the system. For the same reason the gaolers encouraged the introduction of visitors. In the Fleet in London, butchers and others came to play skittles, fives, and tennis. There was a wine club every Monday, and a beer club every Thursday. Such was the system which it was Howard's mission to destroy. The system was the more horrible because debtors and felons, convicts and committed persons, were all dealt with in the same way. In 1776, out of 4,084 prisoners, 2,437 were debtors, 653 petty offenders, and only 994 felons. In many places there was only one gaol delivery a year. In Hull they used to have the assize only once in seven years.[1]

Howard died in 1790 a martyr to the cause which he had undertaken. He caught a malignant fever of a poor stricken unfortunate, whom he had humanely visited, and the disease proved fatal to a constitution, which had never been strong, and which had been seriously tried by the noble work in which he had been engaged. At the time at which Howard died a young girl, Elizabeth Gurney, was growing up into womanhood at her father's house at Norwich. Young as she was, she had already collected twenty poor children around her, and was occupying herself with their education. In the last year of the eighteenth century she moved to London, on her

Elizabeth Fry.

[1] Howard's *State of Prisons*, fourth edition, pp. 12, 15, 219, 278, 291, 300, 324, 339, 383, 397.

CHAP. II.

marriage with Joseph Fry, a strict and devout member of the Society of Friends. Her husband was a wealthy banker. Mrs. Fry was only thirty years of age; she had the duties both of a mother and of a wife to occupy her time, and the pleasures, which London affords to the wealthy, were at the disposal of her leisure. A casual visit paid to Newgate in 1813 first revealed to her the squalor and misery of the wretched inmates. Touched by the scenes which she had witnessed, she succeeded in forming a society of ladies, who undertook to visit the female prisoners. She was rewarded for her noble exertions by the results of her disinterested ministry. The most hardened and depraved evinced gratitude for kindness to which they had no claim, and to which they had previously been strangers. The female prisoners, who had been previously unmanageable, became docile under her gentle treatment, and a new example was furnished of the truth of the old adage, that you may lead a man whom you cannot drive. A casual anecdote, extracted from the pages of the 'Annual Register,' may perhaps prove the kind of place that Newgate was when Mrs. Fry commenced her visits. In the year before that in which Mrs. Fry formed her association of ladies, a visitor to the prison had his pocket picked within the walls, and his watch stolen. The keeper ordered the convicts to be searched; but the convicts, one hundred and forty in number, considered this 'as an encroachment on their liberties,' took possession of the common yard, and expelled the officers. Driven out of the yard, they mounted the staircase, and, after remaining in revolt for many hours, were ultimately starved into submission. It is almost impossible to realise in 1878 that such a scene could have been witnessed in the heart of London only a little more than sixty years ago; but the contemporary annalist, who records the revolt and the subsequent submission of the convicts, hardly appears to realise

that there was anything unusual in the events which he gravely relates.[1]

Such was the place in which Mrs. Fry's noble ministry was carried on. Efficient prison discipline was, in fact, almost impossible, because the construction of the prisons was so faulty that the warders were unable to enforce their authority. There were no means of isolating refractory prisoners; there were no means of preventing the prisoners from combining with each other; and in the case of revolt the collective force of the convicts was arrayed against the warders. A very different person to either Howard or Mrs. Fry was urging the Government to construct a prison on an improved principle. It is necessary to reserve for a future chapter any detailed consideration of the work of Jeremy Bentham: it is sufficient, in this place, to observe that Bentham, amidst his other avocations, was constantly pressing on the Government the desirability of constructing a prison on a totally different model from any which had previously been adopted. Bentham saw that a number of galleries radiating from a common centre might be effectually guarded from a single standpoint: and that therefore, without increasing the number of warders, their efficiency might be almost indefinitely augmented. Bentham's model was known as the Panopticon, a name which happily expresses the power of the single warder to command any number of galleries radiating from a common centre. It ultimately led to the construction of the Penitentiary at Millbank by the Government. But the history of the Penitentiary at Millbank was, in its way, hardly more creditable than that of the older prisons of the metropolis. Vast sums of money were wasted on the building. Its sanitary condition proved anything but satisfactory, and mistaken notions of philanthropy relaxed the reins of discipline. Men made the common mistake of leaping at a

Bentham's Panopticon.

[1] *Ann. Reg.* 1816, Chron. p. 129.

CHAP. II.

bound from one system to another, and did almost as much harm by pampering the convicts as they had done previously by degrading them.[1]

The change of feeling, which was clamouring for the reform of prison discipline, was at the same time insisting on the abolition of degrading punishments. In 1815 the punishment of flogging was still publicly inflicted on women. It was not abolished for two years afterwards.[2] Men, however, were still whipped by the score; 6,959 persons were flogged in seven years.[3] The punishment of the pillory was abolished for every offence except perjury in 1815, and the old parish stocks were gradually removed from the metropolis.[4] All these changes indicated a more humane disposition towards offenders. But the true humanity, which endeavours to prevent crime, not to punish it, was still hardly known. There was no efficient police force in London. A small horse patrol nominally guarded the suburbs; a small foot patrol nominally guarded the metropolis. The horse patrol consisted of only fifty-four, the foot patrol of only one hundred men. The peace of London, otherwise, depended on the parish constables in the daytime, on the old watch at night. The ingenuity of man could have hardly devised a feebler protection. The watchman was appointed by the parish. His duties did not extend beyond the bounds of his parish. He would not cross those bounds to arrest a criminal or to prevent a felony. He was only required to move out of his watch-box twice in every hour, and his beat was so short that he could be in his box for fifty minutes out of every sixty. No pains were taken to obtain the services of efficient men; no

Police.

[1] See the recently published history of Millbank.

[2] *Hansard*, vol. xxxvi. pp. 833, 932.

[3] *Hansard*, New Series, vol. viii. p. 1438. Flogging women in private was retained up to the year 1819.

[4] The last stocks in London were in Portugal Street, St. Clement le Danes. They were removed in 1826. *Ann. Reg.* 1826, Chron. p. 117.

means were taken to increase their efficiency. From motives of humanity old men were retained in the service long after they had ceased to be active. From motives of economy men were engaged who asked the lowest wages, and who notoriously supplemented their wages by contributions from the bad characters around them. In addition, indeed, to the night watch the authorities of each parish regularly elected either constables or headboroughs. But these officers rarely served in person. Their deputies levied a kind of black mail on the suspicious characters within their jurisdiction; and, in consequence of this black mail, the constable's office, though singularly ill-paid, was sought after by many persons. The headboroughs in Shoreditch received, for instance, only 4*l.* 10*s.* a year. Out of that sum they had to pay several small fees. Yet there was no difficulty whatever in obtaining persons to act as headboroughs. Little reflection, indeed, is sufficient to show that the office must have been a very lucrative one. Some one kept a disorderly house, or infringed the licensing laws. If the headborough were dishonest and the offender were rich, the offence could easily be compounded. If composition were from either cause impossible, the offender could be prosecuted at the Old Bailey, when the headborough obtained his expenses. The expenses which a headborough was allowed for a prosecution at the Old Bailey amounted from twenty-eight to thirty-six shillings a day. The expenses were allowed on each case, and an active headborough in a disorderly parish could, therefore, easily make a very good thing out of his office. The ingenuity of the headboroughs, indeed, was sufficient to enable them to improve on this position. If one headborough brought a charge, and another appeared as a witness, both headboroughs were allowed their expenses.[1] Nothing, therefore, was easier than for one jack in office to serve a

[1] Report of 1818, p. 137.

CHAP. II.

friend in office a good turn by dragging him in as a witness. So long as people only broke the law, the parish constables and the headboroughs could easily make a living. It was stated, indeed, on authority, which it is difficult to gainsay, that the headboroughs did not always wait till the law was broken to commence a prosecution. Instances commonly occurred where the headboroughs invented the charge for the sake of getting money for the prosecution of it; and language was put into the mouth of persons, whom they wanted to become prosecutors, solely for the purpose of affording the headboroughs an excuse to attend at the Old Bailey.[1]

Blood-money.

The conduct of the headboroughs in promoting prosecutions was excusable because it was imitated or even exceeded by the other police authorities. By various parliamentary statutes, commencing with the reign of William and Mary, and concluding with the reign of George II., rewards, varying in amount from 10*l.* to 40*l.* were paid on their conviction for the apprehension of any highwaymen, coiners, burglars, sheep-stealers, and convicts at large. No less than 18,000*l.* were paid in such rewards in the single year 1815. But, in addition to these rewards, an old Act of William III. authorised the issue of what was technically called a Tyburn ticket, to any person who apprehended a felon. A 'Tyburn ticket' exempted the holder from serving in any office in the parish in which the felony was committed. It was transferable; it was usually sold; and was worth from 12*l.* to 40*l.*—the price varying in the different parishes. Any person, who succeeded, therefore, in apprehending the utterer of false money, or even a man with false money upon him, was entitled, on the conviction of the offender, to 40*l.* from the public purse, and to a parochial ticket which in certain cases was worth 40*l.* more. An instance has already been given in this chapter

[1] Report of 1818, p. 137.

of an officer, who confessed that he had succeeded in hanging an innocent man for the sake of this reward. Other instances of the same character may unfortunately be found by the diligent enquirer. No less than eight persons, one at least of whom was a Bow Street officer, were condemned in 1817 for 'seducing people into the commission of criminal offences for the purpose of obtaining the parliamentary reward on their conviction.'[1] 'Blood money,' as the parliamentary reward was commonly called, was, moreover, productive of other evils than these. As blood money was only offered for particular offences, it was the interest of the police officer to avoid interference with the criminal until he committed a 40*l.* crime. Young children were left unpunished for the minor depredations, committed at the commencement of their criminal career, and carefully watched, in the full expectation that they would ultimately do something which would justify the grant of a reward on their apprehension. The criminal, in fact, was fostered up to a certain period of his course by the very officers who ought to have busied themselves in stamping out crime.[2] The thief-takers—as a Middlesex magistrate put it—were interested in concealing and encouraging thieves until their crimes arrived at the highest point.[3] Conscious of these facts, jurymen were in the habit of discounting police evidence. They could not resist the suspicion that the constable was perjuring himself for the sake of the reward. While then the detestable system led to the occasional conviction of innocent persons, it concurrently produced the constant acquittal of real offenders. The reward defeated the very purpose which had induced the legislature originally to offer it.

It may perhaps be thought that the police officers clung to a system which enabled them occasionally to

[1] See Police Report, 1816, p. 264; Report, 1817, pp. 324 and 423.
[2] Report, 1816, p. 65. [3] Report, 1816, p. 65.

CHAP. II.

make very large sums of money. But there appears to be very little doubt that the more respectable members of the force thoroughly disliked this method of recompensing them for their services. They considered, with probably very good reason, that, if the rewards were done away with, their pay would necessarily be increased; and that a certain addition to their pay would be a much better thing than the possibility of obtaining an uncertain reward. It is, moreover, shocking to relate that when the rewards[1] reached them, they had left a considerable proportion of their substance in the numerous hands through which they had passed. The law required that the reward should be paid without fee; but, in practice, considerable fees were charged before they were paid. The under sheriff charged a fee; an additional charge was made for the judge's signature; and the clerk to the Recorder of London derived a considerable emolument from the complimentary fee which he charged for his own trouble. Numbers of officials had, therefore, a direct pecuniary interest in the maintenance of the system of parliamentary rewards; and the system derived a vitality, which it could not have otherwise enjoyed, from the defence of these interested supporters.[1]

A parliamentary reward, it has been shown, was only paid on the conviction of some of the higher class of offenders. But a reward was also paid on the conviction of persons who were rather unfortunate than guilty. The

Vagrants.

sturdy vagrant had been a constant object of suspicion from the days of Elizabeth; and strenuous efforts had been made to suppress vagrancy. A poor person, compelled to travel from one parish to another, was bound to provide himself with a pass, which he could only obtain by applying to a magistrate. The issue of a pass was, however, only one of the methods by which vagrancy was discouraged. Vagrants, begging their bread, were liable

[1] Police Report, 1817, pp. 323 and 325.

to seven days' imprisonment; and the police in some parishes were encouraged to suppress every appearance of vagrancy by a reward of 10*s.* paid on the conviction of each vagrant. The ingenuity of the parochial police enabled them to derive a considerable pecuniary advantage from these circumstances. When a poor person came to the police office for a pass, the police officers were in the habit of saying 'the magistrates cannot grant you a pass, but here is a penny, or twopence.' If the poor man accepted the dole, one of the officers immediately apprehended him for begging. The magistrates were easily induced to believe that a poor person, who had accepted some coppers from some one, had previously asked for them, and to commit the unhappy wretch to prison. So great was the effrontery of the police, that they occasionally practised the same device a second or third time on one person. A miserable man wanted to be sent home; he applied for a pass; he was poor enough or foolish enough to accept an alms; he was immediately apprehended, committed to prison, and the police officer received ten shillings. A week afterwards he was discharged from custody, but he still desired to go home. He again applied for a pass; he was again foolish enough to accept a penny; the police officer was again rewarded; and he was again sent back to the gaol. It is difficult to credit that such things could have taken place only sixty years ago; but the fact that they did take place rests on authority which it is hopeless to disturb. It is even stated that the ratepayers of a single parish in the metropolis were defrauded of many hundreds a year by these ten shilling rewards; and that the police officers spoke almost openly of the conviction of a beggar as 'an easy ten shillings.'[1]

The ordinary criminal escaped with impunity; the attention of the police officers was mainly directed to the

[1] Police Report, 1817, pp. 325 and 352.

CHAP. II.

acquisition either of a 40*l.* reward, or of 'an easy ten shillings,' but the governing classes endeavoured to repress other kinds of crime with the utmost rigour. It is recorded that in 1817 1,200 persons were imprisoned under the game laws.[1] No mercy was ever shown to the poacher; and, perhaps for this very reason, the great body of the community, who had no immediate interest in game, persisted in regarding poaching as a proof of spirit and skill rather than of crime. The same thing was true of offenders against the revenue laws. The smuggler was a village hero: and smuggling was conducted with a publicity that can scarcely be credited. In 1816 'twenty-four men marched in military order through Spring Bank to Cowcaddens, in the suburbs of Glasgow, where in the face of numbers of persons who bawled out "Success to smuggling," they entered a house and deposited their laden flasks.'[2] Illicit stills were to be found in almost every village in Ireland. Seventy-seven men were imprisoned at Omagh Assizes in 1816, for possessing illegal stills; sixty at Lifford; ninety at Derry, where the trials were so numerous that the gaol was not large enough to hold the offenders, many of whom were in consequence liberated on bail.[3] Whisky, which had never paid duty, seemed in fact to possess an additional flavour; and persons in high position were not ashamed to drink spirits, which they knew to be the produce of illegal stills. No one knew Ireland better than Miss Edgeworth; yet she makes Lord Colambre, her hero in the 'Absentee,' reprove his postilion for offering a lift to a man whom he took for an informer. The postilion, of course, had done nothing of the kind. The supposed informer had an illicit still himself; and the revenue officer was in hot pursuit of him. Larry, the postilion, sends the officer in the wrong direction, and, on Lord Colambre's laughing remonstrance, 'So this is the way, Larry, you

[1] *Ann. Reg.* 1818, Hist. p. 135. [2] *Ann. Reg.* 1816, Chron. p. 133.
[3] Ibid., Chron. p. 50.

give a lift to the laws.' 'If the laws,' replies Larry, 'would give a lift to me, your honour, maybe I'd do as much by them. But it's only these revenue laws I mean; for I never to my knowledge broke another commandment. Sure, why would I mind the laws about whisky? Was not I prisint in the court house myself, when the jidge was on the bench judging a still, and across the court came in one with a sly jug of potsheen for the jidge himself, who prefarred it, when the right thing, to claret.'[1] Larry did not exaggerate the facts of the case. There was not a gentleman residing on the banks of the Shannon, who did not encourage illegal distillation by purchasing what was called putteen or potheen.[2] It was in vain that the township was fined whenever an illegal still was discovered. The law wholly failed to eradicate the practice. It was in vain that the troops were employed to seize unlicensed stills. Potheen was obtainable in every Irish village. The fines on the townships constituted a new Irish grievance, but illicit distillation was not put down.[3]

In every respect, then, the criminal system in force at the commencement of the present century was deplorable. The police were inadequate in numbers; they were regarded with suspicion by the surrounding populace; they were tempted to neglect the lower forms of crime, and to occupy themselves with 40*l.* criminals and vagrants. The punishments in force corrupted rather than reformed the offender; and a person, who had once been an inmate of a prison, was almost certain to become a criminal for life. Unhappily, moreover, little attempt was made to check the supply of future criminals. The education of the poorer classes was, in too many cases, regarded with dislike by their richer neighbours; and, in consequence, the great mass of the nation grew up in the profoundest

Education.

[1] *Tales of Fashionable Life*, vol. v. pp. 207, 208.
[2] *Hansard*, vol. xxxiv. p. 706.
[3] Ibid. vol. xxxix. pp. 1504–1516.

CHAP. II.

ignorance of the most elementary knowledge. A Select Committee, appointed in 1818, to enquire into the education of the poor, collected educational statistics in every parish in England. The diligent enquirer, who is not deterred by 1200 pages of Blue Book, may gather from this return the educational state of every English county at the time as correctly as figures can afford it to him. Nor is it easy to conceive a more melancholy picture. England, with a population, which at the preceding census had numbered rather more than 9,500,000, comprised, in 1815, 852,855 poor.[1] Nearly one person in every eleven of the population was a pauper. Four thousand one hundred and seventy endowed schools, enjoying an income of 275,375*l.*, afforded an education to 157,783 children. Fourteen thousand two hundred and eighty-eight unendowed schools educated, in some sort or other, 415,711 children. Rather more than 570,000 children were not wholly destitute of educational advantages. But there must, at the very least, have been 2,000,000 children requiring education. So that for one child, who had the opportunity of education, three were left entirely ignorant. These totals, however, lamentable as they are, give only an imperfect idea of the educational destitution which everywhere prevailed. In Berkshire, for instance, out of a population of 118,279, there were no less than 17,535 poor. One person in every seven was a pauper. Something like 30,000 children must have required instruction, yet the unendowed and endowed schools educated less than 10,000! The prosperous town of Preston, one of the richest cities in the great manufacturing county of Lancaster, with a population of upwards of 18,000 persons, had one endowed school, educating only thirty-six children. Three other schools, one taught by a master, and two by mistresses, existed in the

[1] This was the number of poor stated in the return. The maximum number during the year was greater. See ante, p. 184.

town; but no information was afforded as to the number of children educated at these humble seminaries. The state of education in England was the more reprehensible because the Scotch for nearly two centuries had enjoyed the opportunity of adequate education. A Scotch Act of 1633 had compelled the landowners to provide schools in every parish. The school-house was usually a very humble building; the schoolmaster was only allowed 22*l.* a year. But, though the education was cheap, it was efficient, and accessible to the ignorant inhabitants of the remotest district.[1]

Miserable as was the quantity of education at the disposal of the poor, its quality was still more deplorable. The returns for a single county may again be quoted as illustrative of the educational condition of the whole of England; and Bedfordshire, which stands alphabetically at the head of them all, may be conveniently chosen for the purpose. Bedfordshire, in 1815, contained a population of 70,213 persons; 6,707 of these were returned as poor. There were forty-two endowed and ninety-four unendowed schools in the county, educating respectively 2,066 and 1,914 children. But of the 136 schools, which were thus provided in the county, no less than forty-six, or more than one-third, were kept by 'dames;' and only ten, or less than one in every thirteen, were on what was then called the new plan—the only plan which afforded a reasonable prospect of a decent education to the children attending them. Nor do these figures convey any adequate idea of the educational destitution of the county. Bedfordshire was divided into 125 different parishes. Five of these were comprised in the town of Bedford; and ten were linked together for educational purposes. There ought, therefore, to have been 116 educational centres in Bedfordshire. But in fifty-two out of these 115 centres there

[1] See Brougham's speech, May 8, 1818, *Hansard*, vol. xxxviii. p. 593.

CHAP. II.

were no schools. The poor, therefore, in nearly one-half of the entire county were entirely destitute of the smallest opportunity of educating their children. They had not even the doubtful advantage of sending their unfortunate children to be imperfectly instructed by an old dame.

Some of the upper classes were unfortunately disposed to regard this state of things with considerable complacency. They imagined that it was a political error to educate the children of the poor; that education only tended to make the poor discontented with their lot; and that poverty only ceased to be tolerable when it ceased to be ignorant. Many members of the upper classes, indeed, expressed by their practice a noble dissent from these selfish and vicious opinions. Benevolent ladies and gentlemen endowed or supported schools in their own neighbourhood, excepting, by a genial inconsistency, their own dependents from the doom of universal ignorance to which they condemned the rest of the country. But the endowments were, in many cases, shamefully perverted from their intended uses;[1] and the upper classes in general thought that the poor should not be taught at all, or that they should receive, at the utmost, a moderate instruction in the tenets of the Church of England. More children attended the Sunday schools of Bedfordshire than all the other schools put together; the clergy probably considering that a defective knowledge of Jewish history was of more importance to their flock than reading, writing, or arithmetic. The poor, indeed, were sensible of their own ignorance, and earnest in their anxiety for greater facilities for educating their children. 'The poorer classes are desirous of having the means of education,' was the refrain which was raised in almost every parish in the kingdom. With a few slight exceptions every authority, who filled up a return

[1] Instances of this will be found in *Hansard*, vol. xxxvii. p. 599.

for the Committee of 1818, admitted that no sufficient means were available for the education of the poor. With still fewer exceptions, every authority agreed in stating that the poor were themselves conscious of their want, and desirous of terminating it.

In one respect, indeed, the educational position was gradually improving. The quality of the education supplied was becoming better. A new system of instruction was gradually taking root in the country. Dr. Andrew Bell, to whom this reform was mainly due, was born at St. Andrews in the middle of last century. Entering holy orders, and becoming chaplain to Fort St. George at Madras, he benevolently occupied himself with the education of orphan children in the Military Asylum at that place. A dearth of teachers compelled him to avail himself of the services of his most promising pupils, and he consequently introduced the system, which has since been universally adopted, of pupil teachers. The plan succeeded so well that Bell became satisfied that it was universally applicable; and, on his return to London in 1797, drew attention to the merits of his scheme in a small pamphlet. The pamphlet attracted little notice till, in the following year, Mr. Joseph Lancaster, a dissenter, opened a school in Southwark on Bell's principle. Lancaster's undoubted success attracted the enthusiastic support of the dissenting community, and the Lancaster schools were immediately established in considerable numbers.[1] Nothing could have been more favourable for the cause of education. Reputable churchmen were perfectly willing that the poorer classes should grow up in profound ignorance of the most elementary subjects; but they were not willing that they should be instructed by the emissaries of a rival sect. The spread of the Lancaster schools led to the establishment of Church schools, organised by Bell, and an immense impulse was given to

[1] *Encyclopædia Brit.*, ad verb. Bell; Wilberforce, vol. iii. p. 66.

CHAP. II.

the cause of popular education. The British and Foreign School Society was established by the dissenters in 1807, the National Society by churchmen in 1809, and dissenters and churchmen have thus an equal claim to the merit which belonged to the improved system. The Church may fairly claim that the new system was founded by one of her own children; the dissenters may fairly reply that it would have never been adopted but for the energetic example of a benevolent dissenter. There is some satisfaction in reflecting that religious animosity, which has brought so much evil on the world, and which in the sequel so frequently interfered with educational reform, was the first great stimulus to the spread of education.

Deep, then, as was the gloom which overshadowed the land, the dawn of a better day was breaking on the horizon. Romilly was pleading the cause of the criminal classes; Bell and Lancaster were practically demonstrating the possibility of educating the poor. The recollection of what Howard had done, the knowledge of what Mrs. Fry was doing, were introducing new and beneficial reforms into the management of prisons. These improvements were directly benefiting the most miserable classes in the population. Another great man had just made a discovery, which was as grateful to the rich as to the poor. Among all the diseases which ravaged the population none was more fatal, and none was more dreaded, than the small-pox. During the last thirty years of the eighteenth century ninety-four persons out of every thousand who died within the limits of the bills of mortality died of the small-pox.[1] At the close of the eighteenth century, Edward Jenner, a doctor in Gloucestershire, was struck by the accidental observation of a country farmer, that a pretty dairymaid was in no danger of the small-pox, because she had had the cow-pox. On

Vaccination.

[1] Collated from the statistics in Porter's *Progress*, p. 39.

pursuing his enquiries he discovered that the farmers in his neighbourhood were all aware that the milkmaids who had had the cow-pox were safe from the small-pox, and it occurred to him that the disease might easily be transferred from the udder of the cow to the human subject. Experiment proved the truth of this theory. Vaccination was the result, and man derived from it in a moment the possibility of effectually protecting himself from the worst of the diseases to which, in this climate, he was liable. The benefits which resulted from this admirable discovery were great and immediate. Vaccination was made known in 1798. From 1800 to 1809 the proportions of death from small-pox to all others were reduced from ninety-four to seventy-three in the thousand; from 1810 to 1819 to forty-three in the thousand; from 1820 to 1829 to thirty-five in the thousand; from 1830 to 1836 to twenty-five in the thousand.[1] Never had a single discovery done so much to promote the health and, therefore, happiness of man. A grateful legislature properly rewarded the discoverer with two grants of 10,000*l.* and 20,000*l.* each. Napoleon, in the hour of his triumph, assented to a request which Jenner preferred to him because it came from Jenner, and the discoverer's name is now regarded with even greater gratitude than that of Harvey or of Hunter. The small-pox was a disease to which all men were liable, and all men concur in honouring the man who gave them an opportunity of limiting its ravages. La Place told Mackintosh in 1814 that vaccine, when it supplants the small-pox, will add three years to the medium duration of human life.[2]

The Army.

It may be necessary to supplement this sketch of the state of society in England with some account of the British army and of the British navy in 1815. The triumphs which the army had achieved, under the Duke of Wellington's guidance, both in the Peninsula and in Flanders, had

[1] Porter's *Progress*, p. 39.

[2] Mackintosh, vol. ii. p. 322.

CHAP. II.

for the moment effaced the remembrance of the brilliant victories of Jervis, Hood, Duncan, and Nelson, which had made this country undisputed mistress of the seas. But even the lustre, which shone on our arms, had not reconciled the nation to the continuance of a standing army. There are few things more remarkable in modern history than the continuous protest which the English have maintained against the maintenance of an army. For nearly six centuries after the Norman Conquest no king of England ventured to engage a permanent armed body. The Plantagenets and the Lancastrians relied in their brilliant enterprises on the force which the feudal system placed at their disposal: and, though they commuted the service of their retainers for a definite sum of money, and devoted the money, which they thus obtained, to the pay of a temporary army, they never ventured to maintain a standing army within the kingdom. 'There, my lord,' was Elizabeth's noble reply to the Duke d'Alençon, as she pointed to the crowds who received her in the city, 'there are my guards.' It was with such guards as these that the great queen calmly awaited the invasion of the Armada. She placed herself at the head of the men of England, who were bound by the statutes of armour to provide themselves with arms, and to serve, in the case of danger, in their own immediate neighbourhood.

The progress of society, however, made the continuance of the ancient system impracticable. The statutes of armour were thought to impose an irksome tax on the population; the union of Scotland and England made invasion less likely; and the statutes of armour were repealed. The feudal system survived in name for half a century longer, but finally fell on the restoration of Charles II. After the abolition of the last remnants of the feudal system, the crown had no force whatever at its disposal, and insensibly and by slow degrees the formation of a standing army began.

CHAP. II.

The position at the Restoration was peculiar. Charles, on the one hand, was disposed to regard an army with little favour, because Clarendon had told him that the army was 'a body of men, who had cut off his father's head; had set up and pulled down ten several forms of government; and that it might be his own turn next.' Parliament, on the other, remembered that it was the army which had marched on London, which had purged the House of Commons, and which had enabled Cromwell to usurp all the functions of government, and to exclude the rest of the nation from participating in it. Both the king and the Parliament were then, for the moment, sincere in their resolution to dispense with an armed force. But, though the king had no need for an army, he insisted on retaining a guard. The same Act which directed the disbandment of the parliamentary forces sanctioned the continuance of what were then called guards and garrisons. The modest force was soon expanded. The companies were enlarged, new companies were added to regiments, and Charles found himself at last at the head of 5,000 men. The Dutch war afforded him an excuse for augmenting this force. Monmouth's invasion induced his successor to still further enlarge it. A camp of 20,000 men was formed at Hounslow, and Parliament took fresh alarm at a force which seemed assembled for the express purpose of overawing it.

Events had tended to create a standing army during the reigns of Charles II. and James II., but Parliament had protested, at every step, against its continuance. At the commencement of Charles II.'s reign the Bill of Rights expressly declared that 'the raising and keeping up a standing army, without authority of Parliament, is contrary to law.' At the close of his reign the House of Commons declared that the continuance of any 'standing forces in this nation, other than the militia, is a great grievance and vexation to the country.' The camp, which

CHAP. II.

James II. formed at Hounslow for his protection, was one of the many circumstances which occasioned his fall.

The Revolution came, but the Revolution, instead of leading to the disbandment of the army, necessitated its increase. The Jacobites unfurled their standard in Ireland; the most powerful of continental sovereigns supported their cause; and, till the peace of Ryswick closed the strife, the country was compelled in self-defence to maintain an army which ultimately comprised some 90,000 men. The conclusion of peace led, however, to an immediate agitation for a disbandment of the army. A pamphlet-war, conducted with vigour on both sides, ensued. Moyle and Trenchard, two able members of the Whig party, recapitulated the history of standing armies, and insisted that, from the days of the Mamelukes to the days of the Commonwealth, the existence of a standing army had always led to oppression. A greater man, however, than either Moyle or Trenchard effectually disposed of all their arguments. Somers, in what he termed the 'balancing letter,' reduced the question from theory to practice, and defended a standing army on the ground of its utility. He showed that the dangers which had been thought inseparable from its institution might be avoided if the army were made dependent on Parliament. Parliament took the common sense view which Somers had adopted. Outside the House the Whigs had concurred in denouncing all standing armies; inside the House the most zealous Whigs only endeavoured to limit the force in 1698 to the numbers found sufficient in 1680. The principle of a standing army was conceded, and the only question in dispute was its size.

From the days of Somers to the present time no one has ventured to insist on the possibility of dispensing with an army. The question has been limited to the one of degree to which Somers' balancing letter reduced it, and the increase or decrease of the army have alone been in

dispute. This alteration in the position of the question was due in the first instance to Somers' letter, but it was also attributable to the legislation which Parliament adopted after the Revolution of 1688. The great grievances, of which the people had complained in the days of the Stuarts, were divisible into four heads. It was asserted that the crown had raised an army without the consent of Parliament: that in defiance of the Petition of Right the troops had been quartered on the people; that they had been governed by a peculiar code of laws which had never received the sanction of Parliament; and that they had been employed to overawe the legislature. The first and fourth of these grievances were obviously removed by Somers' policy. An army, raised with the sanction of Parliament and dependent on its bounty, could not possibly be used by the crown to control the legislature. The third of the four grievances was terminated by an admirable expedient. A Mutiny Act was passed for the first time in 1689; but the Mutiny Act was only passed for a single year. The Crown obtained the requisite power for governing the armed force which it was authorised to form; but the legislature reserved to itself the right of terminating these powers at a short notice. The reluctance with which the English still regarded the formation of a standing army made it necessary, for a century after Somers' time, to quarter the troops on the people. Parliament refused to provide permanent barracks for the troops, because the provision of permanent barracks appeared to contemplate the existence of a permanent army. Even so late as 1812 the erection of some necessary barracks exposed the Tory ministry to unmerited obloquy. Though England had acquired possessions in every part of the world, though she was engaged in the greatest of modern wars, the English were reluctant to admit the necessity for a standing army.

While, however, the country was protesting against

CHAP. II.

the institution of a standing army, the standing army was continually increasing in size and importance. Charles II.'s slender force of guards and garrisons was being gradually developed into a considerable army. William III. had 65,000 men in arms in 1691, and before the conclusion of the war had 90,000 men engaged. The army was reduced after the peace of Ryswick to 19,000 men, 12,000 of whom were for service in Ireland, and 7,000 in Great Britain. During the succeeding century the British army served in almost every portion of the globe; but the armies with which Britain achieved her most glorious successes, were frequently composed of foreign troops. At the conclusion of each war the army was reduced to the slenderest dimensions. At the commencement of the revolutionary war there were not 18,000 men employed in the United Kingdom. About the same number were scattered through the numerous colonies of the British Empire.

The system, under which the army was administered, reflected only too accurately the conduct of the Government in other respects. Birth and favour were the sure passports to distinction, and the common soldiers, treated with the utmost severity, had little but their pay to look forward to. Up to 1806 the troops were enlisted for life, and in 1815 old-fashioned politicians still doubted the expediency of the shorter service which had been at that time introduced by Windham. The men were drawn from the lowest classes of the population; they were occasionally taken from the hulks. While they were retained in the service they were subject to the severest discipline.[1] Men literally died under the lash, or from the effects of it. When they received their discharge, they found little sympathy among the population. 'It's us as pays they chaps!' was the remark with which the regiment in which Lord Albemarle was serving[2] was received on its

[1] Romilly, vol. iii. p. 18. [2] *Fifty Years of my Life*, vol. ii. p. 68.

return from Waterloo. Wordsworth has related, in the 'Prelude,' his finding a discharged soldier, utterly destitute, painfully endeavouring to find his way home to his distant friends. Every Englishman was proud of the glorious triumphs which the British soldier had achieved. But the British soldier was the very last person whom any Englishman desired to take either into his household or into his employment.

The unpopularity and distrust with which the private soldiers were regarded, did not affect the officers. The military profession was the most gentlemanlike in which it was possible for anyone to engage. A boy with brains might possibly be sent to the Bar; a boy with interest might do very well for the Church; a boy with land might hope to represent the family borough. But a boy who had not brains, interest, or land, was generally sent into the army. If he were killed he required no further provision; if he survived his comrades the pecuniary value of his commission became a small fortune. Boys, it must be remembered, who had any interest at all, did not starve for many months on the pay of a subaltern. Sir Charles Stewart was by no means the most unduly favoured of his generation, and his career is not a bad example of the promotion which young men of good family might obtain in the British army at the close of the eighteenth century. Sir Charles Stewart was an ensign at thirteen, a lieutenant at fifteen, a captain at sixteen, a major at seventeen, and lieutenant-colonel at less than nineteen years of age. When he received his first commission he was an Eton boy, and no one thought it necessary to take the boy from school because he happened to be receiving pay in his country's service.[1]

[1] Vide for this section of the work Clode's *Military Forces of the Crown*; Moyle's Argument against a Standing Army; Trenchard's History of Standing Armies, published in *State Tracts*, published in the reign of William III.; *Encyclopædia Britannica*; Macaulay's *History of England*; Alison's *Castlereagh*, vol. i. pp. 1–5.

CHAP. II.

The Navy.

The navy was perhaps a less popular profession among the highest classes than the army. It was officered in the main from the upper middle class. Parents hesitated to part from their sons at the tender age at which boys went to sea; and they, therefore, preferred a service in which the severance from home ties was usually deferred to a later age. There was, moreover, no purchase system in the navy. The rich man in this profession had no undue advantage over the poor one; and the wealthy preferred a calling n which a full purse was likely to be an advantage. If, however, the army were the more popular profession in the very highest ranks of society, the navy was much more popular among the British people. Three out of every four of the population had probably never seen the sea; but three out of every four entertained the most sincere conviction that at sea they were invincible. Campbell really only expressed the deliberate belief of the nation when he declared—

> Britannia needs no bulwarks,
> No towers along the steep:
> Her march is o'er the mountain waves,
> Her home is on the deep.

The country gentleman, sheltered in his patrimonial estate from every blast that swept over the ocean; the labourer, who had never seen a broader sheet of water in his life than the nearest river; firmly believed that the true home of the nation was the sea; its true defence its wooden walls.

Yet England, at the time of the great war, had not been a formidable naval power for more than two centuries. In the reign of the Tudors the daring of her sons had carried her flag to the remotest territories of the globe. But the Spanish, the Portuguese, and the Dutch had vied with the British; and England possessed no naval force which could compare with the fleets of Spain. The admirable skill and bravery of the British sailors had

enabled our English fleet to contend with the formidable Armada. But, though the engagement was a glorious one for the British navy, the destruction of the Armada was rather due to the storms of heaven than the bolts of the English. A century later the Dutch for a time obtained undisputed mastery of the Channel; and, though Blake subsequently achieved a memorable victory over Van Tromp, De Ruyter in 1667 sailed up the Thames, and insulted the capital of the feeble monarch who disgraced the throne of England. In the war which succeeded the Revolution of 1688–9 the French were at first able to contend on equal terms with the combined fleets of Holland and England; but the great victory of Russell off La Hogue destroyed the naval power of France; and with the commencement of the eighteenth century the English commenced their glorious course of unbroken success at sea. The War of the Succession produced Benbow and Rooke; the war with Spain, Sir George Byng; the Spanish war, Hawke and Anson; the American war, Parker and Rodney. The Spanish and the French were swept from the seas by these great commanders; and the English, used to a career of constant success, shot the captains who hesitated to support their admiral, or the admiral who hesitated to engage the enemy. The triumphs of the British sailors had been great, but the lustre which surrounded Hawke and Rodney was to pale before the rising of an even greater luminary. France twice succeeded in combining the navies of the world against this country, and twice the mighty armaments were destroyed by the British sailors. Howe defeated the French off Ushant, Jervis the Spanish at St. Vincent, Duncan the Dutch off Camperdown. The marvellous successes of Nelson confirmed the impression, which these victories had produced, that the British sailor was invincible; and the battles of the Nile and Trafalgar made this country undisputed mistress

CHAP. II.

of the seas. Once again, after Trafalgar had apparently decided the question for ever, Napoleon endeavoured to array the navies of the world against the British empire. But the Danish fleet was captured at Copenhagen; the Russian fleet surrendered in the Tagus; and the flag of England waved supreme over every sea.

These brilliant successes had made the British sailor regard himself as invincible, and had made his enemies afraid to attack him. It is hardly possible to doubt that the British in many instances owed their success to the terror which their deeds inspired. Admiral Duncan, deserted by all his ships, blockaded the whole Dutch fleet A British merchantman defeated four privateers, and, with twenty-six men, took 170 prisoners. No odds seemed too great for the British sailor to encounter, no exploit too difficult for him to undertake. An universal faith in his invincibility made him invincible, and the reputation which he had achieved filled his enemies with alarm. Yet the men, of whom the nation was thus proud, were raised in a manner and treated with a severity which already appear incredible. The captain, who required sailors to man his ship, sent a press-gang into the streets of any seaport, and swept any ablebodied sailors whom he found into the service. The slightest disobedience was punished, on many ships, with the lash, and floggings were administered with merciless severity. Men, driven into the service by force, and flogged into submission, might have been expected to have lived in a state of chronic mutiny. Fortunately, however, for the navy, the great majority of commanders were as humane as they were brave; and, with some exceptions, the men consequently clung to them with affection Seafaring men, however, used every exertion to escape impressment, and the devices to which they resorted ultimately occasioned a new war with the only powerful country with which Britain had remained at peace.

British sailors, fearing impressment, entered the American merchant service as naturalised Americans; the United States refused to allow her merchantmen to be searched. A dispute, created in this way, was intensified by other differences. War broke out between the United Kingdom and the United States: and in this war the British navy did not increase its reputation. The American navy was manned by men of the same origin as those who had fought at Copenhagen and Trafalgar, and American sailors proved their capacity to contend on equal terms with their opponents. America, indeed, had no fleets which could venture to attack the British navy. But American privateers, scouring the seas, fought a series of battles with British cruisers; and the advantage in these contests did not always or even usually lie with the British. The reputation of the British navy was tarnished by these reverses at the very moment at which the fame of the British army was raised to the highest eminence by the strategy of Wellington. The laurels which had been won by the navy were suddenly transferred to the army, and the lustre which had surrounded one service was paled by the light of the more recent victories achieved by the other. The sword, however, was not to be finally sheathed till the navy had had a new opportunity of marking its prowess.

The expedition to Algiers.

On the extreme north of the Coast of Africa a warlike and piratical state menaced the peaceful operations of the Mediterranean trader. The name of Barbary was indiscriminately applied to the states of Algeria, Morocco, Tripoli, and Tunis, occupying the portion of the African coast which was bounded by the Atlantic on the west, by the Mediterranean on the north, by Egypt on the east, and by the Great Desert on the south. The most powerful of these states was Algeria: and its great fortresses of Oran and Algiers, from their situation and their strength, were a standing menace to the Spanish kingdom. At the com-

CHAP. II.

mencement of the sixteenth century the illustrious Ximenes persuaded Ferdinand of Spain to attempt a crusade against Oran, and had the satisfaction of entering the Moslem city at the head of an expedition undertaken at his advice, furnished at his own cost, and guided by his counsels. Never had Christian prelate achieved so great a triumph as the infirm old Spanish cardinal. The consequences of the victory were splendid. Algiers and Tripoli surrendered to the arms of Spain, the opulent marts of the Barbary Coast were opened to the Spanish trader, and the Mediterranean was freed from the piratical marauders by whom it had been infested. Spain, however, did not long retain her superiority on the Northern Coast of Africa Horuc the corsair, whose red beard gained for him the nickname of Barbarossa, undertook to expel the Spaniards from a fort which they had built in the neighbourhood of Algiers. Murdering the Moorish prince, who had invited his assistance, he usurped the kingdom which he had come to protect; and, rapidly extending his dominion, planted a monarchy, founded on piracy, on the southern shores of the Mediterranean. The arms of Spain eventually defeated and destroyed this troublesome marauder. But Horuc's brother, Hayradin, succeeding to his dominion and nickname of Barbarossa, extended his piratical enterprises with more than Horuc's success. Algiers, fortified at vast expense by the work, it was alleged, of 30,000 Christian slaves, afforded the corsair's fleets ample refuge from any troublesome enemy. A formidable expedition, which the Emperor Charles V. organised against the corsair, was terminated by a frightful disaster; and a state avowedly dependent on piracy, and employing its Christian captives as slaves, continued to menace the trade of the Mediterranean.

During the two centuries and a half, which succeeded the expedition of Charles V., the piratical government of Algiers was frequently attacked by the Christian states of

Europe. Algiers was, on one occasion, reduced to ashes by the French, and its inhabitants were compelled to abstain from their piratical pursuits. But the gain was never more than temporary. The possession of Gibraltar and Minorca by the British, indeed, induced the Algerines to treat British shipping with a respect which they declined to pay to the vessels of other powers. But the corsairs of Barbary still scoured the Mediterranean; the captives, whom they had taken from Christian vessels, still languished in captivity in Algiers; and, to the disgrace of the civilised world, a piratical state was suffered to exist in its very centre.[1]

The outbreak of the Revolutionary war facilitated the ravages of the Barbary pirates. England was the only formidable naval power, and the defenceless vessels of other countries were exposed to the attacks of the corsairs. But the conclusion of the war made the continuance of these ravages utterly intolerable. In the interests of civilisation it was essential that piracy should be put down; Britain was mistress of the seas, and it therefore devolved upon her to do the work. But the task which it was necessary to accomplish was one which even taxed the resources of the British navy. The city of Algiers is built on the northern slope of a steep triangular hill facing the Mediterranean. In 1815 the summit of the hill, five hundred feet above the level of the ocean, was crowned by the Casbah, or ancient fortress of the seas. The town was surrounded with a stout wall, strongly fortified. The fortifications on the sea front were especially formidable and heavily armed. A long pier, three hundred feet in length, projected into the sea. From the end of the pier a semicircular mole, constructed on a ledge of rock, bent in a south-westerly direction towards

[1] Many people will recollect that Pringle, of Crichton, who killed Sir Walter Scott's great-grand-uncle in a duel, fled to Spain, and was long a captive and slave in Barbary.—See Scott's own account of this in his autobiography in Lockhart's Life, p. 2.

CHAP. II.

the town. One hundred and twenty yards from the mole, and opposite to it, another small pier protected the entrance to the harbour. The piers, the mole, the rock on which the mole stood, the batteries above the harbour, were lined with cannon. Five hundred guns thus defended the sea front of the town, and the formidable navy of the Dey of Algiers was ready to support the land defences.

Happily for this country the Mediterranean command was held by an officer whose bravery and skill were fully equal to the dangers before him. Lord Exmouth, the son of Samuel Pellew, the commander of a Dover packet, was born in 1757; he entered the navy in 1770; and for more than forty years he was actively engaged in his profession. He served with distinction in every part of the world. During the American war his gallant conduct on the great inland waters of the Western World gained him the commendations of his commanding officer and his promotion. He participated in General Burgoyne's inglorious campaign; and was reluctantly compelled to share in the capitulation of Saratoga. When the French Revolutionary war broke out he was appointed to the command of the 'Nymph'; and, after a desperate action, he captured the 'Cleopatra,' a French frigate. For this exploit he received the honour of knighthood and was promoted to the command of the 'Arethusa.' He subsequently served in the 'Indefatigable' and in the 'Tonnant,' and in each of these vessels increased the reputation which he had already acquired. His appointment to the command in the East Indies removed him from the theatre in which laurels were to be chiefly won; but, after the death of Collingwood in 1811, he received the command in the Mediterranean. The French, however, were too cautious to risk an engagement with the British admiral, and the British fleet rode in undisputed supremacy over the great

inland sea. Pellew, at the close of the war, received the barony of Exmouth, both in recognition of his own services and of those of the navy; and, when the ministry determined to punish the piratical states of Barbary, they naturally availed themselves of Lord Exmouth's services.

Early in 1816 Exmouth was instructed to proceed to the several states of Barbary; to require them to recognise the cession of the Ionian Islands to Britain; to conclude peace with the kingdoms of Sardinia and Naples; and to abolish Christian slavery. The Dey of Algiers readily assented to the two first of these conditions; the Beys of Tripoli and Tunis followed the example of the Dey of Algiers; and in addition consented to refrain in future from treating prisoners of war as slaves. Exmouth thereupon returned to Algiers, and endeavoured to obtain a similar concession from the Dey. The Dey pleaded that Algiers was subject to the Ottoman Porte, and that slavery could not be abolished without the concurrence of the Sultan. He consented, however, to send an ambassador to Constantinople, in a British frigate, for the purpose of obtaining the Sultan's consent to the arrangement. Exmouth accordingly agreed to a suspension of hostilities for three months, and returned to England to report the result of his negotiations.

Exmouth had hardly set sail for England before an outrage was committed by the Algerines which entirely altered the complexion of affairs. Up to this time the Algerines had scrupulously respected the British flag. An establishment had been formed at Bona, on the coast of Algiers, for carrying on the coral fishery; and the operations, which were undertaken by Corsican, Italian, and Neapolitan boats, were conducted under the protection of the British flag. On May 23, the festival of the Ascension, while the crews were preparing to hear mass, a gun was suddenly fired from the castle, and 2,000 Algerine troops

CHAP. II.

unexpectedly appeared and moved upon the fishermen. The whole of the unfortunate men were massacred; the British flag was torn to pieces and trampled under foot; the house of the British vice-consul was pillaged; and the vice-consul himself was detained in the town.

It is uncertain whether this unprovoked attack on some defenceless fishermen was actively encouraged by the Dey's government. But the British Government rightly concluded that, whether it were actively encouraged by the Dey or no, it was necessary to regard it as a direct affront which it was indispensable to avenge. Lord Exmouth was desired to obtain from the Algerines effectual security for their future peaceful conduct; and he was invited to name the force with which he would be willing to undertake the reduction of Algiers. The experience, which the admiral had gained in his previous visit to the Dey, now stood him in good stead. He had noticed the comparatively narrow front which Algiers presented to the sea, and he concluded that a small force would operate in this narrow space as efficiently as a large one. With this information in his possession he demanded only five ships of the line, five frigates, and five bomb vessels. The ministry were alarmed at the moderation of the admiral. There was a tradition at the Admiralty that Nelson had himself affirmed the impossibility of attacking Algiers with less than twenty-five sail of the line; and the Ministry doubted the possibility of Exmouth effecting with a small force what Nelson had declined to undertake without a large one. There was this difference, however, between the opinions of Nelson and Exmouth: Exmouth had made himself personally acquainted with the strength of Algiers; Nelson had only derived his information on the subject from the reports of other persons. Exmouth, from his acquaintance with the locality, was enabled to convince the ministry of the sufficiency of his own estimate. The force which he required was rapidly got

ready, and before the summer of 1816 was over Exmouth set sail for Gibraltar.

Exmouth received at Gibraltar a reinforcement which he had not anticipated. Admiral Capellen, of the Dutch navy, asked leave to join in the dangers and honours of the expedition, and Exmouth readily assented to the gallant Dutchman's request. The reinforcement was not unwelcome. Exmouth, on reaching Gibraltar, learned that the Dey was making extraordinary preparations against the expected attack. Additional works were being rapidly thrown up on both flanks of the town and at the entrance of the mole. Forty thousand men had been brought down from the interior for the construction and defence of the fortifications; and the Dey openly avowed that he was aware of the preparations of the English, and that he was straining every nerve to meet them. The British consul had been arrested; four officers and fourteen men of the 'Prometheus' had been also thrown into captivity; and the Dey, by these measures, had indicated his resolution to resist the British demands, and his conviction that he was strong enough to do so.

Every day's delay, then, was increasing the strength of Algiers, and Exmouth consequently decided on leaving Gibraltar without any delay whatever. Head-winds and calms, however, baffled the admiral's intention. The fleet, which left Gibraltar on the 14th of August, notwithstanding the exertions of its commander did not reach Algiers before daybreak on the 27th of August. A calm rested on the surface of the deep. There was not wind enough to move the ships towards the town; and Exmouth seized the opportunity of despatching an officer in a boat to deliver an ultimatum to the Dey. The principal demands which Exmouth had been instructed to make were four: first, the immediate surrender of all Christian slaves without ransom; second, the restitution of the money which had been paid for the ransom of some Sardinian and

CHAP. II.

Neapolitan captives; third, a solemn declaration from the Dey that he would, in future wars, treat all prisoners according to the usages of European nations; and fourth, the conclusion of peace with the Netherlands on the same terms as those on which it was concluded with the English.

It was nearly two o'clock in the afternoon when the boat which Exmouth had despatched with his demand, was observed returning from the harbour. A signal was flying from her that no answer had been received from the Dey. A light sea-breeze had in the meanwhile sprung up; and the fleet, animated into motion, bore down under a press of sail on the city. Exmouth himself, on board the 'Queen Charlotte,' led the way towards the mole, and anchored within a pistol-shot of the enemy's batteries. Admiral Capellen, on the 'Melampus,' took up his position off the southern batteries. Admiral Milne, in the 'Impregnable,' Exmouth's second in command, closed the British line.

A profound silence prevailed on both sides. The Algerines permitted the ships to move into their stations. The British reserved their fire till they could deliver it with full effect. A crowd of spectators watched the ships from the shore; and Exmouth waved his hat to them to move and save themselves from the fire. They had not the prudence to avail themselves of his timely warning. A signal shot was fired by the Algerines from the mole. The 'Queen Charlotte' replied by delivering her entire broadside. Five hundred men were struck down by the first discharge. In a few minutes the batteries on the mole-head were entirely silenced, and the 'Queen Charlotte' was enabled to turn her attention to another part of the fortifications.

The battle, which had thus begun at two o'clock in the afternoon, continued till ten o'clock in the evening. By that time half Algiers had been destroyed; the whole

of the Algerine navy had been burned; and, though a few of the enemy's batteries still maintained a casual fire, their principal fortifications were crumbling ruins; the majority of their guns were dismounted. The British and Dutch fleets had done their work, and it was time to withdraw them from the annoyance of a dropping fire. Happily, too, the wind favoured the withdrawal of the allied fleet. In hot countries the wind blows from the sea to the land in the daytime, because the land, heated by the sun's rays, warms and raises the air, producing a vacuum which the cool sea-breeze fills. After sunset, however, the sea retains its heat longer than the earth, and the wind therefore blows from the land to the ocean. Exmouth had calculated on the sea-breeze to assist him in his attack; he had relied on the land-breeze to facilitate his retreat; and the light wind, which had sprung up after sundown, enabled him to withdraw his vessels from the range of the enemy's batteries. Safe from molestation, they could temporarily repair their losses, and prepare, should further action be necessary, for a renewal of the contest.

The work, however, had been already done so completely that no renewal of the contest was possible. 'For your atrocities at Bona on defenceless Christians,' wrote Exmouth to the Dey, 'and for your unbecoming disregard to the demands I made yesterday, the fleet under my orders has given you a signal chastisement by the total destruction of your navy, storehouses and arsenal, with half your batteries. As England does not war for the destruction of cities, I am unwilling to visit your personal cruelties upon the inoffensive inhabitants of the country, and I therefore offer you the same terms of peace which I conveyed to you yesterday in my sovereign's name: without the acceptance of these terms you can have no peace with England. If you receive this offer as you ought, you will fire three guns; and I shall consider

CHAP. II.

your not making this signal a refusal, and shall renew my operations at my own convenience.' The fleet awaited the issue of this message in anxious expectation. Three hours elapsed before the three shots, fired in succession, announced the Dey's unconditional assent to the British ultimatum. On the first day of September Exmouth had the satisfaction of acquainting his Government with the liberation of all the slaves in the city of Algiers, and the restitution of the money paid since the commencement of the year by the Neapolitan and Sardinian Governments for the redemption of slaves.

Chronologically the expedition to Algiers took place within the period with which this history is concerned. But the bombardment of Algiers forms rather the sequel of the period of war which desolated Europe from 1792 to 1815 than the prelude to the period of peace which was won by the crowning victory of Waterloo. Algiers would never have been permitted to exist as the pest and scourge of the civilised world, if the great nations of Europe had not been more intent on their own quarrels than on preserving the seas from the rapacity of piratical marauders. When peace was signed it was no longer possible to allow the states of Barbary to continue their lawless depredations; and the nation which was virtually mistress of the seas was compelled for its own credit to put down the robbers by which the ocean highways were infested. Exmouth's expedition was then unavoidable; but the manner in which it was undertaken, and the courage and promptitude with which it was carried out, afford remarkable proofs of the strength of the British navy and of the hardihood of British sailors. Algiers had the reputation of extraordinary strength, yet Exmouth had had the courage to attack it with a force which even men accustomed to the deeds of the British navy conceived inadequate. His courage was justified by the result. It was on the 23rd of May that the outrage

at Bona was committed: on the 27th of August it was signally avenged. In the ninety-five days, which intervened between these two dates, the news of the outrage had been brought to England; the expedition under Exmouth had been determined on; its organisation had been completed; it had sailed and accomplished its object. Rarely before had a signal insult been so swiftly avenged. The world understood from the blow that Britain could strike swiftly and strike hard. A new leaf was added to the wreath with which her arms were already crowned; a new chapter was added to the history of the British navy.

In one other particular, moreover, the expedition to Algiers gained fresh honours for this country. Britain was, in one sense, the nation which had the least interest in terminating the lawless ravages of the states of Barbary. Her strength on the seas had won for her standard a respect which the Algerine corsairs paid to the flag of no other power. The pirates of Africa inflicted less injury on her commerce than on the trade of other nations. Yet Britain voluntarily undertook the work which other countries were still more interested in performing. She recognised that her position, as mistress of the seas, made it her duty to maintain the police of the ocean; and at her own charge, without solicitation, without recompense, she hurled her fleet against the strongest of Mussulman fortresses. The loss which she sustained was considerable; but it was trifling when it was weighed against the consequences of the achievement. 128 men were killed and 690 wounded on board the British fleet; the Dutch lost 13 killed and 52 wounded. Every death on the field of battle is a subject for regret. It is but poor comfort to those who mourn to assure them that their mourning is shared by only a few others. But it is impossible to deny that the sacrifice of 150 lives was only a light price to pay for the permanent delivery of

CHAP. II.

the Mediterranean from the scourge of piracy. Every British life lost at Algiers won the immediate liberation of twenty Christian slaves, and spared in future years other Christians from the horrors of slavery.

Nor, amidst the congratulations which followed the victory, was it possible to avoid satisfaction at the circumstances under which it had been achieved. The cause of Christianity had again united the British and the Dutch; and the flags of Britain and Holland had shared the dangers of the battle and the glories of the victory. Situation, religion, tradition, and taste pointed to a firm alliance between Holland and England. Both of them were placed on the north-western frontier of Europe. Both of them had accepted the tenets of the Reformed faith. Both of them had stood in arms to resist the ambition of Catholic Spain. England had on one memorable occasion obtained a king from Holland. The Dutch and English shared between them the carrying trade of Europe. Yet, though Holland and England had so many grounds for close alliance, England and Holland had too frequently been engaged in warfare with each other. The keen rivalry, which had animated the fleets of Blake and Van Tromp, was recollected by the sailors of the Batavian republic. Holland ranged herself on the side of France; and the Dutch and English again contended for the mastery of the seas. The expedition to Algiers had the merit of effacing the recollections of the long war. The glorious success, gained by the Dutch and English combined fleets, obliterated the traditions of Camperdown and Walcheren.[1]

There was one other point in which the expedition to Algiers was important. It was a new mark of the increasing prostration of the Mussulman power. The Mahometans had for centuries been expelled from Western

[1] *Ann. Reg.* 1816; Hist. pp. 97–105; Chron. pp. 230–243. Alison's *Hist. of Europe*, vol. i. pp. 136–155. Osler's *Life of Lord Exmouth*, pp. 294–325.

Europe; but they were still formidable in the Western Mediterranean. Exmouth's victory imposed new limits on their power. The crescent retired before the cross; and the followers of Mahomet ceased to be a terror to Christian merchantmen. The victory which was thus gained formed only a single link in a long series of events. The decline and fall of the Mussulman race was as gradual as its rise. The history of the Mahometan power may, indeed, be fairly compared to the familiar changes in the luminary which the Mahometans have chosen as the symbol of their race. The crescent, which was emblematical of their progress, also foreboded their decay. The thin thread of light, which is visible in the heavens at eventide, is hardly feebler or fainter than the first trace of Mahomet's power. The crescent increases every evening till it is gradually enlarged to the full moon, and the Mahometan power increased with almost equal rapidity, till it spread over the greater portion of an entire hemisphere. The moon no sooner attains its fulness than it begins to wane; the followers of Mahomet had hardly acquired their supremacy before they began to decay. The moon increases in lustre as it recedes from the setting sun; and the Mahometan power shone with increasing brightness as the day of Roman civilisation was succeeded by the darkness of the Middle Ages. The light of the waning moon grows fainter and fainter as it is overtaken by the god of the coming day; and the splendour of Mahometan civilisation paled beneath the rays of European progress. Will it be ultimately extinguished in the full sunlight of a Christian and civilised world?

CHAPTER III.

CHAP. III.

Rise of England and Englishmen during the reign of George III.

AN attempt has been made in the preceding chapters to trace the material and moral progress of the British people during the reign of George III.; and to describe the condition of society in England at the termination of the great war. In the course of this description the reader must have observed the influence which a few great men had exercised on the progress of the empire. Rodney, Howe, Duncan, and Nelson had made their country mistress of the seas. Wellington had won respect for her arms in every European nation. But the brilliant exploits of Britain's admirals, the ability of her great general, the capacity of her statesmen were attended with less momentous consequences than the discoveries of her inventors and the works of her engineers. The inventions of Hargreaves and Arkwright, of Crompton and Cartwright, of Watt and Davy made a more beneficial and a more enduring impression on the world than the triumphs of Nelson and Wellington or the policy of Pitt. The spinning jenny and the safety lamp have been used by millions who would have been unable to have fixed the date of Waterloo or Trafalgar. Thousands of persons are acquainted with the details of a steam-engine who would be puzzled to give an intelligible account of the career of Pitt.

No previous period in British history had ever witnessed such varied scenes as the reign of George III. No previous period had ever produced so many great men in so many different callings. The lives of these men closely affected the future of their fellow-countrymen, and exerted

an influence on the British character which has never since been effaced. Before Rodney lived and fought, other nations competed on equal terms with the British at sea. Before Wellington's campaigns, the superiority of the French to every nation on land was usually taken for granted. Before the age of Brindley, no one would have ever dreamed of looking for a great invention from the British race. Engineering had its home in Flanders or Holland. The trade of the world was transferring itself from Italy to Antwerp. A few brave Englishmen, penetrating into unknown regions, were, indeed, acquiring, like the Spaniard and the Dutchman, a reputation for enterprise. But the majority of Englishmen at home vegetated on their paternal acres, as their fathers had done before them, and neither courted nor desired any material improvement.

The new light, which broke on the world in the course of the eighteenth century, rolled away the heavy cloud which had obscured the capacity of Englishmen for centuries. Activity succeeded to torpor, industry to lassitude, and the English, which had been the least ingenious of races, suddenly became the most inventive of them all. Various causes conspired to produce this unexpected result. The enterprise of a few great men extended the bounds of the empire. An extended empire naturally led to an increased trade; an increased trade stimulated industry; and a stimulated industry encouraged inventions for facilitating production. Military success, too, induced others to strive to succeed in other callings; the people, though they had neither power nor influence, were free to turn their industry to its best account; and while some persevered in one direction, others persevered in others, contending in various ways for the rewards which it was now for the first time seen that perseverance would gain for them.

The persevering industry, which distinguished all classes

CHAP. III.

George III.

of Englishmen during the reign of George III., eminently characterised the sovereign himself. George III. was the most industrious and persevering king who ever governed this country. It was his constant habit, throughout his reign, to peruse and master every document submitted to him by his ministers. He persevered in the contest with America when all his advisers thought perseverance hopeless. 'I will be very free with you,' he said to the first American minister:[1] 'I was the last to consent to the separation' of the United States from the British empire. Yet George III., as a boy, was the most indolent among princes. He is said to have met the remonstrances of his tutor with the excuse that he was 'constitutionally idle.' The constitutionally idle boy, within ten years, became the hardest worker of all his countrymen.

Qualities, which are rightly accounted as virtues in other men, are occasionally dangerous when they are found in princes. Every parent would rejoice to have a son whose parts were so excellent, whose judgment was so clear, and whose industry was so unflagging, as the parts, the judgment, and industry of George III. Yet no careful reader of history can doubt that these very qualities in the king, on more than one occasion, imperilled the existence of the British monarchy. George III.'s capacity for work naturally tempted him to transact a great deal of business himself. It was inevitable that a very industrious and very capable young man should seek occasions for turning his industry and capacity to account. In consequence, during the greater part of his reign, George III. exercised a close supervision over affairs which it would have been much better for him to have left to his ministers to regulate. Had the supervision of the king been confined to the details of administration, the results, however, would not have been disastrous. But it was George III.'s misfortune to have been reared in

[1] Jesse, vol. ii. p. 517.

a school where the notions of kingship were totally opposed to the principles of constitutional monarchy. 'Be a king!' was his mother's characteristic advice to him on her deathbed; and 'to be a king' in the Continental sense of the term was the great object of George III.'s ambition. As a king, he dismissed the great Lord Chatham, and threw off the dominion of the Whig aristocracy; as a king, he selected the unfortunate and incompetent Bute for a minister; as king, he resisted the righteous revolt of America; as king, he refused to concede the just claims of his Roman Catholic subjects. Every act of his kingship proved disastrous to himself and unfortunate for his country. His rupture with the Whig aristocrats exposed him to the narrow-minded counsels of George Grenville; his policy towards America led directly to the independence of the United States; his opposition to the Roman Catholic claims led to his one great success, but the success was purchased at the cost of his reason.

The personal government which George III. attempted made him, during the earlier part of his reign, the most unpopular of sovereigns. The populace knew that he had selected Bute as his minister, and they transferred to the master the hatred with which they regarded the servant. The populace knew that the king exercised a direct influence in his councils, and they associated the incompetence and follies of his advisers with their sovereign. The letters of Junius, the arrest of Wilkes, the fearful Gordon riots, the loss of America—these, and other incidents, inflamed the passions of the people and irritated the multitude with its ruler. For nearly a quarter of a century after his accession, George III. was unpopular with his subjects. But, after twenty-four years of his reign had been completed, one of the most remarkable reactions of public opinion recorded in history occurred in his favour. Rodney's victories had thrown a halo of glory over the conclusion of the American war. The rise of

CHAP. III.

the second Pitt to power had provided the king with a minister at once trusted and capable. The conduct of the heir-apparent had filled all reflecting persons with alarm at the prospect of his succession, and had made them pray, as they had never prayed before, for a continuance of the present reign. At the very moment, too, when the glass was beginning to rise, some wholly unforeseen circumstances influenced the political barometer. A wretched woman, whom there is every reason to believe was insane, made a furious but happily unsuccessful attempt on the king's life; and the king behaved with a courage and a kindliness which revolutionised all who saw his conduct or heard of it in his favour. A few years afterwards a still graver misfortune afflicted the monarch. He lost, happily on that occasion only for a time, his reasoning faculties, and his ministers were compelled to make arrangements for conducting the government without him. From that moment the popularity of the monarch never waned. He recovered, and found himself the most popular man in England.

The generation, which cheered George III. during the latter half of his reign, were probably as unreasoning in their enthusiasm as their fathers who had hissed him in the first half of it. George III. never deserved unmixed applause; and he certainly never ought to have met with unqualified censure. But the enthusiastic admirers of the monarch had, at least, as much to say for themselves as his indiscriminating judges. If the latter could point to arbitrary acts occasionally committed, the former could dwell on the admirable example which the king was setting to the highest and lowest of his subjects. Marrying, in all probability against his own inclinations, in deference to what he rightly concluded was the most fitting arrangement for his subjects; living the most virtuous and domestic of lives; maintaining in public the splendour which was required of him, but preferring in private

the simplest fare and the scantiest luxuries; basing every action on religion, faithful to his wife, affectionate to his children, kindly towards his dependents, charitable to the poor, George III. was a pattern to all his subjects. 'George II.'s bad morals,' wrote no lenient critic, 'bore their fruit in George III.'s early years: as I believe that a knowledge of that good man's example, his moderation, his frugal simplicity, and God-fearing life tended infinitely to improve the morals of the country and to purify the whole nation.'[1]

Such, briefly told, was the character of the monarch who, at the time at which this history opens, was nominally king of England. For all intents and purposes, however, George III. was already dead. Ever since the autumn of 1810 he had been afflicted with infirmities which would have moved the pity of the hardest heart. His mind deranged, his sight gone, his hearing lost, he wandered through the chambers of his stately palace, with less influence than the meanest of his subjects. A slight interval of returning consciousness enabled him to learn and comprehend the stirring events which preceded and occasioned Napoleon's fall in 1814. But the afflicted monarch was never able to become acquainted with the great events of the following year. The crowning victory, with which his reign will always be associated, was as little to the sovereign as to the unborn babe.

Queen Charlotte.

There can be little doubt that, at the commencement of his reign, George III. had contemplated elevating a subject to a share of his throne. Lady Sarah Lennox's bright eyes and unusual beauty had captivated the susceptible heart of the young king. Political considerations induced him to turn to another alliance, and to offer his hand to one of the poorest of the princesses of Germany. Charlotte Sophia, for fifty-seven years Queen of England, the daughter of the Duke of Mecklenburgh Strelitz, had

[1] Thackeray's *Four Georges*.

CHAP. III.

so little anticipation of her future greatness that she is said to have once plaintively inquired, 'Who will take a poor little thing like me?' Yet the penniless daughter of the Duke of Mecklenburgh Strelitz was admirably suited for George III. She adored the husband who had raised her to the first throne in Europe; she shared all his feelings and all his weaknesses. Dignified in public, simple in private life, virtuous, religious even to a fault, her conduct and her opinions accurately reflected the conduct and opinions of her lord. No man and woman ever passed happier or more correct lives than George III. and Queen Charlotte. When George III. was unpopular with all his subjects, the queen appreciated him, and never doubted that he would ultimately be known to the world as she herself knew him.

It is probable that the domestic happiness of the queen decreased from the very period at which her husband became more popular. The fearful affliction, with which the king was visited in 1788, commended him to the pity of all his subjects; but his illness at the time, and the constant apprehension of its return, must have been most distressing to his wife. Nor could she have derived much happiness from her large family. Her sons were the source of almost endless anxiety to their parents. Shelley wrote of them as

> Princes, the dregs of their dull race, who flow
> Through public scorn mud from a muddy spring.

It was hardly fair to call the Regent mud; it was grossly unfair to compare the Regent's parents to a muddy spring. But Shelley's words show the utter contempt which was felt for the sons of George III.

The Prince of Wales.

George Augustus Frederick, the eldest of the family, was not a pleasing character. He was a bad son, a bad husband, a bad father, a bad subject, a bad monarch, and a bad friend. Yet he had external graces of person

and manner which must have been singularly captivating. It has been recently stated that he gave himself the name of 'the first gentleman in Europe.' Unfortunately, the language which he habitually used, the habits to which he was constantly addicted, and the scenes which he frequented, made the title appear like a sarcasm. Yet there were occasions when he showed that he could thoroughly deserve his self-imposed title. He knew how to captivate genius like that of Scott, or piety like that of Wilberforce. But the Regent, in company with Scott and Wilberforce, was in reality only acting a part, and proving himself, in doing so, a consummate actor. On ordinary occasions he placed no restraints either on his actions or on his tongue. The first gentleman in Europe thought it an admirable joke to make a duke as drunk as himself; he saw nothing indecorous in the use of language which was hardly fit for his stable. At the age of twenty the prince fell desperately in love with a beautiful widow, Mrs. Fitzherbert, the 'sweet lass of Richmond Hill.' His love for her was one of the best traits in his character. There is no doubt that he was secretly married to her; yet he directed Fox to contradict the report of his marriage in the House of Commons; and he had the assurance to pretend to Mrs. Fitzherbert that he had never authorised Fox to make the contradiction. The prince, who was guilty of this double treachery to his friend and his wife, was not twenty-four years old.[1]

Dissolute habits and habitual hypocrisy were not, however, the only vices in the prince's character. He was recklessly extravagant, and, in consequence, involved in the most serious pecuniary embarrassments. When he came of age the king settled on him 50,000*l.* a year; the revenue of the Duchy of Cornwall, to which he succeeded, amounted to 12,000*l.*; and Parliament provided him with 30,000*l.* to start in life, and 30,000*l.* to pay off

[1] Jesse, vol. iii. p. 365.

CHAP. III.

the debts which he had incurred as a minor. A Prince of Wales, with a clear income of 62,000*l.* a year, in those days ought to have been affluent. Within a year the prince admitted that he owed 160,000*l.* Two years afterwards, when the king settled on him an additional 10,000*l.* a year, his extravagance had raised his debts to 193,000*l.* Four years afterwards his Royal Highness told Lord Malmesbury that his debts amounted to 370,000*l.*; while at the time of his marriage, or in 1794, when the prince was barely thirty-two, Parliament actually voted 650,000*l.* to extinguish them.[1] 'If he had been a manufacturing town, or a populous rural district, he would not have cost more.'[2]

The prince, by his reckless and inexcusable conduct, had placed himself completely at the mercy of his father. His father, who had long desired his eldest son's marriage, knew that Parliament could be persuaded to make his forming some suitable alliance the condition of discharging his debts. To the prince himself the idea of marriage was far from palatable. He was, in the sight of God, the husband of Mrs. Fitzherbert; his affections were, for the moment, fixed on Lady Jersey; and a score of other beauties were more or less associated with his name. If he could have escaped from his embarrassments by any other method, it is certain that he would have carefully avoided matrimony. But his debts were so large that he had no alternative but submission. He consented to marry: and the choice of his father fell on his cousin, Princess Caroline of Brunswick.

The Princess of Wales.

Princess Caroline of Brunswick, who thus became the wife of the first gentleman of Europe, was the daughter of the reigning Duke of Brunswick and of Augusta, the eldest sister of George III. The Princess Caroline, who at the time of her marriage was in the twenty-seventh

[1] Jesse, vol. iii. pp. 17, 18, 149, 211.
[2] Thackeray's *Four Georges*, p. 175.

year of her age, had, in the eyes of a partial courtier, a 'pretty face, not expressive of softness; her figure not graceful; fine eyes, good hand, tolerable teeth, but going; fair hair and light eyebrows; good bust; short, with what the French call *les épaules impertinentes*.'[1] The Duke of Clarence had seen the young lady, had admired her, and had given a favourable report of her person to the Prince of Wales. The first gentleman of Europe had, perhaps, higher notions of female beauty than his rough sailor brother; he certainly had higher notions of cleanliness. It was in vain that Lord Malmesbury had risked Her Royal Highness's displeasure by suggesting that she should pay a little more attention to her person. The Princess took his advice good-humouredly, but never followed it. Her neglect disgusted her husband on her first introduction to him. He called for a glass of brandy. The princess herself declared that he was drunk on her wedding-day.[2] Nine months afterwards Her Royal Highness presented her husband with their only child. Before that period had elapsed differences, which proved irreconcileable, had separated the Prince of Wales from his wife for ever.

The Prince of Wales, on his separation from the princess, returned to the irregular attachments of his former years, the follies and vices which were apparently inseparable from his nature. The unhappy princess retired to a villa at Charlton. Separated from her husband, removed from the influence of the court, neglected by the aristocracy, she was driven to form acquaintances in the neighbourhood with persons of rank unequal to her own. Her manner, unfortunately, in the opinions of her best friends, was characterised by a careless levity. 'Ah, false and faint-hearted troubadour!' she said, for instance, to Sir Walter Scott, who hesitated for a moment in fol-

[1] Malmesbury, vol. iii. pp. 178, 179.
[2] *Diary Life and Times of George IV.*, vol. i. p. 38.

CHAP. III.

lowing her into a conservatory, 'you will not trust yourself with me for fear of your neck.'[1] If she could so far forget the dignity of her position as to joke in such a manner with a casual visitor, no surprise can be felt at the calumnious reports which were whispered about her. A similar remark, made to a less virtuous and less scrupulous person, might have involved her in serious embarrassment.

For many years, however, after the separation of the prince from the princess no real impropriety was proved against her. Her husband was sedulously engaged in collecting evidence against her conduct; the Whig ministry of 1806 consented to appoint a secret tribunal to inquire into it; and a formal and one-sided investigation actually took place. But, though her accusers were in some sort her judges, the main accusation against her was not made out. The boy whom she had adopted into her household—little Willikin, as he was familiarly called—was proved to be the son of a certain Sophia Austin; 'the evidence of all the servants, as to the general conduct of the princess, was very favourable to Her Royal Highness;'[2] and the accusation of improper conduct, in short, broke down. The commissioners, indeed, who conducted the investigation were not able to stop at this point. The same levity, which had shocked Sir Walter Scott, seemed to them to require some mark of their disapprobation. But the main charge, which had been brought against the princess, was so grave that the reflection of her judges on her conduct looked very much like a complete acquittal. Though the inquiry had been secret, the facts transpired; and the princess was surrounded with a halo which she did not deserve. 'She is an enchanting princess,' wrote Scott, 'who dwells in an enchanting palace.'[3] The ignorant multitude might be excused for their enthusiasm,

[1] Lockhart's *Scott*, p. 140.
[2] So wrote Romilly, vol. ii. p. 144; and Romilly was counsel for the prince.
[3] Lockhart, p. 140.

when even Scott's head was turned by the princess's courteous levity.

The fact that the levity of her conduct had made it possible for her husband to insist on its investigation would have warned most women to have adopted a more prudent course in future. The princess, however, never altered either her habits or her manner.[1] Her levity was certainly as marked as it had ever been. Her chief favourite was a singing master, whom her ladies nicknamed Chanticleer. Nicknames, however, were not reserved for favourites. In the slang of the princess's court the princess herself was always Mrs. Thompson; the Regent, Mr. Thompson; Princess Charlotte, Master Thompson. These nicknames show, at any rate, the utter disregard of form and ceremony which the princess displayed. Her levity, however, was for the moment of less consequence. In 1814 she had withdrawn from England, and soon afterwards she took a beautiful villa on the Lake of Como. The tourists who annually visit the Italian lakes turn with interest from the enchanting scenery to the villa where the injured and neglected wife of a worthless British king passed a portion of her existence. Few, perhaps, of the many thousands of Englishmen who annually gaze on the Villa d'Este are competent to express an opinion on the justice of the charges which were preferred, half a century ago, against its illustrious mistress. But every one of them has a more or less perfect acquaintance with the irregularities which disgraced the life of

[1] Her conduct was again indirectly investigated in 1813 by the Privy Council. The prince, in 1814, did his utmost to keep the great sovereigns, who visited Europe after the peace, from paying any attention to the princess. He prevailed on his mother with this view not to receive her at court. Queen Charlotte, in consequence, became very unpopular with the populace, and was hissed. 'My lords,' she complained, 'I be fifty year and more in this country, and well respected; *but now I be shspit upon.*' (Brougham, vol. ii. p. 215.) One of the mob—so runs a more amusing story—put his head into the Regent's carriage and said, 'Where's your wife? Where's your wife?' The Prince Regent is reported to have turned to the Emperor of Russia, who was with him, and to have said, 'Emperor, that is for you.'

CHAP. III.

George IV.: and, with true British logic, contend that the queen was innocent, not from any sense or knowledge of her innocence, but because they think that the faults of the husband should condone the errors of the wife; because they know that Caroline was notoriously less guilty than George.

Princess Charlotte.

If the quarrels of the Regent and the princess had simply concerned themselves, their existence would have been sufficiently unfortunate. Unhappily, however, the guilt of the parents reacted on their offspring, and their differences marred the early days of their only daughter.

Weep, daughter of a royal line,
A sire's disgrace, a realm's decay.
Ah! happy if each tear of thine
Could wash a father's fault away!

Weep—for thy tears are virtue's tears,
Auspicious to these suffering isles—
And be each drop in future years
Repaid thee by thy people's smiles.[1]

The Princess Charlotte, the subject of these touching verses, was, at this period, adored by the nation; and the judgment of the nation seems to have been well deserved. Without any very great natural beauty, with white eyebrows and eyelashes, with a complexion disfigured by marks of small-pox, and with a figure already large and tending to the corpulency which she inherited from both her parents, the princess's winning manner and bright expression made her peculiarly attractive. For all intents and purposes she had never known what it is to have a father. Her father's jealousy had allowed her only occasionally to visit her mother. Her grandmother, with all

[1] It is said that these verses were suggested by the circumstances connected with the princess's first visit to the Opera. She had dined at Carlton House. Her father had taken more wine than was good for him, and had indulged in language which had shocked his daughter. The princess rose to make her first appearance at the Opera, but rose in tears, expressing herself strongly on the distress she had felt in hearing her father's language.—*Memoirs of the Regency*, vol. i. p. 250; cf. Ward, vol. i. p. 432.

her excellent qualities, was frigid, distant, and incapable of appreciating the disposition of her impulsive grand-daughter; and the few persons who were allowed to be on intimate terms with her were uneasy at her head-strong and wilful nature.[1] In accordance with her father's orders, her life was so secluded that the public in general knew nothing of her merits or of her faults. She was fifteen years of age before she was allowed to go to the Opera. She was sixteen before she was introduced to the quietest society. She had grown from a girl into a woman before she had emerged from the dull privacy of her retired life. Constantly entreating her father to allow her the ordinary suite which befitted her position; praying that a lady of the bedchamber might be substituted for a governess; and that an establishment might be granted to her, the princess was, at last, allowed to 'come out in a limited way.' A limited concession of this character was absolutely indispensable; for the prince was seriously contemplating his daughter's marriage. The husband whom he selected for her was in every sense but one unobjectionable. The Prince of Orange had had an English education; he had served in the English army; he was considerate, courteous, 'unexceptionable.'[2] But, on the other hand, the recent reverses which Napoleon had sustained had restored the prince's father to the throne of Holland. The heir-apparent to a Continental dominion could hardly do otherwise than pass a considerable portion of his time in his future kingdom; and the Princess Charlotte, as his wife, would necessarily have to live with her husband. It seems certain that the consciousness of this necessity had, in a great measure, recommended the match to the Prince Regent. The unnatural father was jealous of the popularity which surrounded his own daughter,[3] and

CHAP. III.

[1] Lady Rose Weigall's *Memoir of Princess Charlotte*, pp. 67, 75.

[2] Princess Charlotte's own word. Ibid. p. 99.

[3] There were good grounds for the jealousy which the Regent felt. 'The Regent,' wrote Romilly, on November 30, 1812, 'went to the

CHAP. III.

desired her removal to another sphere. But the daughter had inherited the obstinacy of both her parents, and saw that her interest lay in her residence in England. The Regent sent his brother and his ministers to explain to her that she was technically only heir-presumptive, and not heir-apparent to the throne; and that there could be no objection to the residence of an heir-presumptive abroad. The expression did not, probably, reconcile the princess to the suggested arrangement. She knew that she was her father's daughter; and that, unless her father had a son, she was his heir. But the contingency of the Regent's ever having a son was very remote. He was already an old man in years. His dissipated life had weakened an originally strong constitution; and his wife, some years younger than himself, was alive and well. The princess had a right to consider herself her father's heir, and was firm. The Regent lost his temper, and made his cause worse by losing it. The Prince of Orange committed the blunder of siding with his would-be future father-in-law; and the princess retaliated by breaking off the marriage. The Regent was furious. He dismissed his daughter's household; and the princess rushed into the street, hailed a hackney carriage, and drove to her mother's house in Connaught Place. She was with difficulty persuaded by her father's ministers to return to his roof.

The conduct of the princess had made her marriage with the Prince of Orange absolutely impossible. If, indeed, she had had any real affection for his person, the question of residence would not probably have proved an insurmountable difficulty. She would have gladly followed

House of Lords and opened the session. In his way to the House and back again he was received with a dead and most humiliating silence: no marks of disapprobation, but no applause. The Princess Charlotte, who was present as a spectator of the ceremony, was recognised by the people on her return, and was greeted with loud and repeated huzzas.' Romilly, vol. iii. p. 73.

a husband of her choice to another land, and have forgotten the distant interests of her future subjects in the immediate promptings of her own heart. It was fortunate for this country that her mere tolerance of the Prince of Orange enabled her to form a calm and impartial decision on the matter. It would have been a serious misfortune if the heir presumptive to the throne had resided permanently abroad, or if the fortunes of England had been intimately associated with those of a second-rate Continental kingdom. A second Hanover would have formed a second cause of weakness, expense, and anxiety to the country. But the rupture of the princess's engagement was, in another sense, unfortunate. The dynasty of the House of Hanover had been seated for a century on the throne of England. But the descendants of George I. seemed likely to die out. Old men, who had remembered the doubts and difficulties of a disputed succession at the commencement of the reign, had seen the happiest promise for the future in George III.'s large family. But, towards the close of his long reign, it seemed possible that George III.'s fourteen children might leave only one legitimate descendant behind them. His eldest son had a single daughter; and, as a married man living apart from his wife, had not the slightest prospect of other children. His second son, the Duke of York, had been married, in 1791, to the Princess Royal of Prussia, but the marriage had not been blessed with any issue. His third son, the Duke of Clarence, had some natural children, but he was unmarried.[1] His fourth son, the Duke

[1] He had, however, frequently meditated matrimony. 'Before he went to Ramsgate,' in 1811, he wrote to Lady C—— L—— to propose, who wrote him a very proper letter in answer, declining the honour in the most decided terms. . . . Upon finding she had accepted Pole (who, by-the-by, is solely indebted to him for this acceptance) he wrote to Lord Keith to propose for Miss Elphinstone, who in the most decided and peremptory terms rejected him.' In 1818 he proposed to Miss W——, 'a fine, vulgar miss,' who accepted him. He was persuaded, however, to abandon the match in a week, and to propose to the future Queen Adelaide. *Memoirs of the Regency*, vol. i. p. 146; vol. ii. pp. 231, 232.

CHAP. III.

of Kent, was also a bachelor. His fifth son, the Duke of Cumberland, had, about the period at which this history commences, married a woman who had already buried one husband and who had been divorced from another. The duke's marriage was not regarded with favour by the country, and his wife's age made it unlikely that she would have many children. George III.'s sixth son, the Duke of Sussex, had infringed the Royal Marriage Act by marrying, first at Rome, and afterwards in London, Lady Augusta Murray; and his seventh son, the Duke of Cambridge, was still unmarried. At the close of the great war, moreover, only one of George III.'s six daughters was married; and his single married daughter had no children. The only prospect, therefore, of the crown being eventually worn by a descendant of George III. apparently consisted in the marriage of the Princess Charlotte, or in the possible issue of the Duke of Cumberland. The Duke of Cumberland, however, was the least popular of the seven sons of George III.; and unhappily there was a good deal in the duke's character and life which fully accounted for his unpopularity. Those people who knew the duke best were the most anxious for Princess Charlotte's marriage, because they were the most desirous of preventing the Duke of Cumberland's succession to the throne. They were, of course, unable to foresee the fortunate events which ultimately prevented this contingency, and which provided England with a queen, reared under happier circumstances than those which had surrounded the childhood of Princess Charlotte, and which averted the otherwise inevitable succession of the Duke of Cumberland to the throne.

Happily in 1815 five lives still stood between the duke and the throne. The duke was only the fifth son of George III. In the event of the death both of the Prince of Wales and of his only daughter, the succession would in the first instance have devolved on the Duke of York. The

CHAP. III.

The Duke of York.

Duke of York was the favourite son of George III. His father had sent him, when he was a boy, to be educated in Prussia, and had wept bitterly at this parting from him. The palace, seven years afterwards, was 'in one universal rapture' at the duke's return from abroad.[1] The duke seems at this time to have fully deserved the admiring affection of the king and his family. 'A warm-hearted, manly, unaffected, and unsophisticated youth, his affections had not as yet been deadened by a daily intercourse with the profligate and the selfish.' In only a year the warm-hearted, manly, unaffected youth had degenerated into 'a stupid sot,' drinking and playing night after night at Brookes', ridiculing his father, who, for the first time, had been stricken with mental malady; and drowning his regret at the king's recovery in wine and dissipation.[2] Badly as the son behaved to his father, the father never lost his affection for the son. When the Revolutionary war broke out, the king's influence obtained the command of the British army in the Netherlands for the Duke of York. When the retreat of the army necessitated a change in the command, the king was bitterly hurt at the duke's recall. Within three weeks of it the duke was advanced to the command-in-chief of the army; and, with a short interval, he filled that high situation during the remainder of his life. With no qualifications for the command of an army in the field, it was universally admitted that the duke made an admirable Commander-in-Chief.

The occasion, however, which had compelled the duke to retire from the command of the army for an interval, had drawn public attention to the dissipation amidst which George III.'s sons were passing their lives. Colonel Wardle, a member of Parliament, had formed an intimate acquaintance with the notorious Mrs. Mary Ann

[1] Madame D'Arblay, quoted in Jesse, vol. iii. p. 19.
[2] Jesse, vol. iii. pp. 80–105.

CHAP. III.

Clarke. This lady, the wife of a common builder, had succeeded by her beauty and her wit in winning the affections of the Duke of York. She exercised an almost unbounded influence over him, and ventured even to approach him with petitions for the professional advancement of friends of her own. The duke's readiness to comply with her wishes seems to have suggested to her the possibility of deriving a considerable pecuniary advantage from her connection with the Commander-in-Chief. She allowed a belief gradually to spread abroad that the best hope of advancement at the Horse Guards lay in conciliating the Duke of York's mistress. Officers of position paid her large sums of money for the sake of securing her interest; and when they succeeded she took care to assure them that their success was entirely due to her intercessions. There does not seem now to be any reason for believing that the duke himself was in the least aware of the traffic in which his mistress was engaged, or of the use which she was making of his name. But, on the other hand, it is certain that he had the indiscretion to listen to her recommendations on professional subjects. While the duke and Mrs. Clarke continued on terms of intimacy nothing was publicly known of the matter. In the course of 1807, however, the duke separated from Mrs. Clarke, settling on her a pension which he made dependent on her good behaviour. Mrs. Clarke did not probably consider it inconsistent with her good behaviour to form a new connection of the same character as that which she had had with the duke. The duke, with incredible meanness, thereupon withdrew his pension. Mrs. Clarke's indignation at this mean conduct induced her to reveal the particulars of the traffic in which she had been engaged to Colonel Wardle, her latest favourite. Colonel Wardle moved for an inquiry into the matter in the House of Commons. The duke foolishly demanded, and the ministry of the day foolishly com-

plied with his demand, that the inquiry should be public. In consequence all the details of the private life of the king's second son were publicly revealed; and the revelation was much more damaging from the circumstance that it was made by a very clever and very fascinating woman, with whom he had once lived, and whom he had afterwards discarded. Though the House declined to declare that the duke was cognisant of the corrupt practices of his mistress, he only escaped censure by voluntarily resigning his appointment. Two years afterwards the duke was reappointed to his high military command, and in that capacity undoubtedly rendered admirable service to his country. But the disclosures of 1809 still remained indelibly associated with his name. Many persons doubted whether their existence should not have placed an insuperable bar upon his reappointment.

The duke's connection with Mrs. Clarke was the more discreditable from the circumstance that he was a married man. His married life was peculiar; but it was not unhappy. The Duchess of York—a Princess Royal of Prussia—was a strange, good-natured woman; and she seems to have regarded her husband's amours with comparative indifference. The duke's establishment at Oatlands was the most uncomfortable in the world. The stable was full of horses, but there was never one to ride on; the house was full of servants, yet the guests were never attended to. The duchess amused herself in the daytime with her monkeys, and at night by playing cards. Creditors, never paid, were clamouring for their dues.[1] When the statue to the duke was erected in Waterloo Place, it was humorously suggested that the lightning conductor on the top of it was a file for unpaid bills.

It can hardly be necessary to pursue any further the unsavoury details of the lives which George III.'s family were leading. An eldest son, separated from his wife,

[1] Greville, *Memoirs*, vol. i. pp. 4-7.

CHAP. III.

and devoted, in the recesses of his palace, to the most vicious pleasures;[1] a second son, overwhelmed with debt, and made the subject of the most damaging reflections; a third son, with a large illegitimate family dependent on him. The poor stricken father might have used to his children the touching words of Eli: 'Why do ye such things, for I hear of your evil doings by all this people. Nay, my sons; for it is no good report that I hear.' The country regarded the princes' conduct with disfavour for another reason. Peers by creation, they were legislators; and their voice was constantly raised on the side of oppression. When Wilberforce, in 1806, succeeded in carrying his bill for the suppression of the slave-trade through the House of Lords, forty-three peers supported and eighteen opposed the third reading. 'Of this eighteen, one-third were the king's sons: the Dukes of York, Clarence, Cumberland, Kent, Sussex, and Cambridge, having all voted against it.'[2]

The Wellesley family.

Precedence in a constitutional monarchy is necessarily given to the king and his family; but neither the long pedigree of the House of Hanover nor the rules of Court could gain respect or popularity for the Regent and his brothers. Foremost in rank, they occupied the first place in no one's thoughts. The very courtiers despised the princes, to whom they paid the customary marks of deference. In 1816 there was one name which held the first place in the heart of every Englishman; the greatness of one hero had dimmed the reputation of all the others. Arthur, Duke of Wellington, was the third son of the first Earl of Mornington by Ann, a daughter of Lord Dungannon. His father, Lord Mornington, was lineally descended from a certain Walter Cowley, who settled in Ireland in the sixteenth century. The Cowley family is said to have once possessed the

[1] The sentiments of Brougham; see Romilly, vol. iii. p. 236.
[2] Romilly, vol. ii. p. 140.

estate of Wellington, which the duke subsequently purchased, and from which he took his title. The heiress of the Cowleys, long afterwards, married one Garret Wesley, a gentleman of Meath; but, like the Cowleys, English by descent. The issue of this marriage died out in 1728; and the last survivor, another Garret Wesley, left his estates and his name to his cousin, Richard Cowley. Richard Cowley Wesley, after sitting in the Irish House of Commons, was raised to the Irish peerage by the title of Lord Mornington. His eldest son was subsequently advanced to a still higher dignity and made Earl of Mornington. The first Earl of Mornington had five sons;[1] and four out of the five obtained peerages for their distinguished services. The eldest son became Marquis Wellesley; the second, Lord Maryborough; the third, Duke of Wellington; the fifth, Lord Cowley. No family ever received so many honours in so short a time as were bestowed on the sons of the first Lord Mornington.

Lord Wellesley.

Richard, Viscount Wellesley, Lord Mornington's eldest son, was thought, as a boy, to monopolise the ability of the family. In an age distinguished for the elegance of its scholarship he was known as one of the most elegant scholars; and Eton and Oxford looked forward to his career, and fondly expected him to throw fresh lustre on the places of his education. Nor did Lord Wellesley deceive the promise of his youth. Made Governor-General of India in the thirty-eighth year of his age, he rivalled the achievements of his most brilliant predecessors, and in seven years doubled the revenue and more than doubled the dominion of the old East India Company. Lord Wellesley, indeed, if one of the most successful was one of the most autocratic of Governors-General. He was an absolute monarch, and acted independently both of the king and of the company. 'The most surprising circumstance,' wrote one of his contempo-

[1] He had six sons, but one died in infancy.

CHAP. III.

raries, 'attending Lord Wellesley's wars, victories, conquests, and treaties was this, that neither the king's government nor the company received any direct accounts of them from him till more than a year after they had taken place: all intermediate intelligence coming by indirect channels. Of his war with the Mahrattas he sent no account till after (as it appeared) the whole was terminated.'[1] On his return to England Lord Wellesley hardly maintained the reputation which he had won for himself as Governor-General of India. His disposition and his training unfitted him to shine in English politics; and he had no patience for the compromises to which all English politicians must submit. Born to command, he could not bring himself to obey. He could not act patiently as the subordinate of any minister; and those who would have welcomed him as a colleague would not tolerate him as a chief. Three years and a half before this history commences Lord Wellesley had withdrawn himself from the ministry. In 1816 he exercised only a slight influence on the government. His talents might have made him its most distinguished member.

The Duke of Wellington.

In the numerous wars which he had successfully prosecuted in India, Lord Wellesley had found in his brother Arthur his ablest lieutenant. The great general had not given as a boy much promise of his future greatness. The place of his birth was doubtful; the date of it was doubtful. His mother thought 'the slender, blue-eyed, hawknosed, and rather sheepfaced boy hopelessly deficient in mental ability; and, after a short residence at Eton, Lady Mornington despatched him to the military college at Angers, that he might be fitted "to become food for powder."'[2] Wellesley obtained his first commission—an ensigncy in the 73rd—in 1787. His promotion was rapid. In less than a year he became a lieutenant in

[1] Colchester, vol. ii. p. 20.

[2] *Encyclo. Britan.*

the 76th; in 1791 he obtained his company in the 58th; in 1792 his majority in the 33rd; and, with his brother's assistance, he purchased his lieutenant-colonelcy in the same regiment in September 1793.

The first service, on which Wellesley was engaged, very nearly drove the young officer from his profession. He was sent to join the Duke of York's army in the Netherlands. The duke had neither the experience nor the ability which would have fitted him to command an army in the field; many of his inferior officers were incompetent; the troops were grumbling and retreating; and the game was up before Wellesley had a share in it. The 33rd was ordered to cover the retreat; and Wellesley acquired credit, both for himself and his men, by the skill with which these orders were carried out. But the mismanagement of the campaign disgusted him with the service, and, on his return home, he applied for civil employment. An officer who had had interest to obtain the lieutenant-colonelcy of the regiment six years after the date of his first commission, might have naturally imagined that he might easily have obtained some profitable post. Fortunately for himself and his country, Wellesley was refused. The minister, in refusing him, unconsciously affected the whole history of the world. Wellesley, after his failure to obtain the civil employment which he had desired, threw himself heartily into his profession. The 33rd was ordered to India; and thither its young commander, who was prostrated with disease when it sailed, followed it. He arrived at Calcutta at a critical period in the history of our Indian Empire. Tippoo Sahib had heard reports of the brilliant successes which the French Republicans had achieved; and perhaps naturally had concluded that an alliance with France afforded him the best prospect of escaping from his engagements with the British. The Governor-General desired Lord Harris to anticipate Tippoo by moving on Seringapatam; and Colonel

CHAP. III.

Wellesley was directed to lead one of the columns of attack. It was on this service that he sustained the only serious repulse which he ever experienced. But the repulse did not retard his future promotion. His elder brother, Lord Wellesley, became Governor-General; and, with a partiality which was criticised at the time, selected Colonel Wellesley, after the fall of Seringapatam, for the command of the town. Lord Wellesley's partiality was amply justified by the event. A new Mahratta war broke out; and Wellesley, with a small force of Europeans, totally defeated a vast horde of Indians at Assaye. Clive, at Plassy, had not triumphed against greater odds. Since Plassy, India had seen no such decisive victory.

Wellesley had gone to India in a fortunate hour for his reputation. His return to England in 1805 was equally opportune. England was engaged in the severest struggle which she had ever encountered; and she had no general and no army. The Tory government of the Duke of Portland came into power; and Wellesley joined the ministry as Chief Secretary for Ireland. He had, at this time, however, no intention of exchanging his profession for civil employment. In 1807 he left his office to command a division in Lord Cathcart's army, at the bombardment of Copenhagen. In 1808 he again crossed the seas to win a striking victory at Vimiera: to find himself superseded by Burrard and Dalrymple, and compelled to become a party to the humiliating Convention of Cintra. In 1809 he embarked on the great campaign which has made his name immortal. The cause of the Spanish Peninsula was at that time almost hopeless. The French, in enormous strength, occupied nearly the whole of Spain. Only a small British army was stationed on the shores of Portugal; and Soult was preparing, with an apparently irresistible force, in an almost impregnable position behind the Douro, to subjugate the corner of the Peninsula which was still unsubdued. Wellington, sud-

denly crossing the Douro in Soult's face, compelled him to abandon his impregnable position. Marching boldly towards Madrid, he proved his own capacity and the mettle of his soldiers, by defeating Joseph Buonaparte and 50,000 men at Talavera; and then leisurely retiring into Portugal, carried out the vast plans which ultimately freed the whole of the Peninsula from the invader, and contributed to the destruction of the French empire.

The problem which Wellington had before him was, with the comparatively small force at his disposal, to drive a much more numerous enemy from a country which it had already conquered. He solved it by forming a vast entrenched camp in the immediate neighbourhood of Lisbon, to which his army could always retire, and in which it could be absolutely secure. In such a camp he was in the immediate neighbourhood of the sea; and his army could be supplied with the maximum of certainty and at the minimum of expense.[1] The secrecy and despatch with which the lines of Torres Vedras were formed were as remarkable as the judgment which had suggested their construction. Massena, when he fought the useless battle of Busaco, or when he turned, after his defeat, the position

[1] Wellington realised at Torres Vedras the great truth on which the Spartan, Archidamus, and the Athenian, Pericles, had both insisted at the commencement of the Peloponnesian war, and which received its most important demonstration in the Crimea. 'We are superior, it is said'—so spake Archidamus—'in the force of infantry of our confederacy, and we will ravage their country. But they have large possessions far beyond the reach of your infantry, and a fleet that will come and go with the produce, undisturbed by any force that you can oppose to it; while your irresistible infantry will stand amid the devastation itself has made.' (Mitford's *Greece*, vol. iii. p. 58.) Mitford's is a free but, on the whole, fair rendering of the passage in the original *τοῖσδε ἄλλη γῆ ἐστὶ πολλὴ ἧς ἄρχουσι, καὶ ἐκ θαλάσσης ὧν δέονται ἐπάξονται*, κ.τ.λ. Pericles cheered the drooping spirits of the Athenians in almost the same words: *οἱ μὲν γὰρ οὐχ ἕξουσιν ἄλλην ἀντιλαβεῖν ἀμαχεί, ἡμῖν δέ ἐστι γῆ πολλὴ καὶ ἐν νήσοις καὶ κατ' ἤπειρον· μέγα γὰρ τὸ τῆς θαλάσσης κράτος.* (Thucyd., Liber i. c. 81 and 143.) 'For they have no other country whence to obtain supplies; while we have our choice among islands and continents. The command of the sea is, indeed, a most important possession.' (Mitford, vol. iii. p. 73.) But Mitford's words give a very imperfect idea of the eloquence and strength of the *μέγα γὰρ τὸ τῆς θαλάσσης κράτος.*

CHAP. III.

which he should never have assailed, imagined that Wellington was being driven into the sea. No historian has ever disclosed the feelings with which the French general first surveyed the heights of Torres Vedras before him. One condition of the contest became, at once, clear to any competent observer: the English, from thenceforward, could not be driven from Portugal. It was still to be seen whether they could drive the French from Spain.

It would be impossible in this volume to trace the strategy by which Wellington accomplished this object in the four succeeding years. The names of Fuentes D'Onore and Albuera; of Ciudad Rodrigo and Badajos; of Salamanca and Vittoria; of the Bidassoa, the Pyrenees, and Bayonne, will be associated with the ability of the British general and the prowess of the British army for all time. In 1809 Sir Arthur Wellesley had entered the Peninsula, a young British officer, with an Indian reputation. In 1814 he received the thanks of Parliament as Baron, Viscount, Earl, Marquis, Duke. No other British subject, to quote Lord Eldon's involved language, 'had ever risen from one dignity to another until he had attained every dignity, each conferred by distinct grants, made upon different occasions, for different services, and all those services rendered to the country before he could return to it to take his seat [in the House of Lords] after the grant of the dignities.'[1] No general since the reign of Anne had risen so rapidly; because, since the days of Marlborough, no British general had shown such capacity or achieved such distinction.

Had the war finally closed with the stirring events of 1814, had Napoleon's banishment to Elba terminated the struggle, Wellington would have won the lasting gratitude of his fellow-countrymen, but his reputation would hardly have stood so high as it does now. He had met and defeated all Napoleon's favourite lieutenants, Massena, Soult,

[1] Twiss's *Eldon*, vol. ii. p. 252.

Junot, Victor; but he had never yet been matched with Napoleon himself. The event, however, proved that the British general's sword was not to be finally sheathed until it had encountered the sharp onslaught of the French emperor. Napoleon escaped from Elba. The mere knowledge of his escape drove the Bourbons from the soil of France, and scattered the representatives of the Allied Powers, busily quarrelling over their conquests at Vienna. In their distress they all turned to Wellington for aid, and Wellington placed himself at the head of the British and Prussian armies in Belgium. The first shock of the war fell on the country to which he had thus repaired. With marvellous expedition, and with unrivalled skill, Napoleon threw the whole weight of the force which he had hastily collected across his northern frontier. Driving the Prussians from a badly chosen position at Ligny, and compelling the English, in consequence of the defeat of their allies, to withdraw from Quatre Bras, Napoleon, on the 18th of June, stood face to face with Wellington at Waterloo. The English general was, at last, matched on about equal terms with the greatest soldier of modern Europe.

The desperate battle which was the immediate result of the conflict will always be memorable in the pages of history. It settled the map of Europe for half a century; and it gave Europe the longest period of peace which she had ever known. Yet, as a mere example of tactical skill, it deserves only slight attention. Napoleon made the mistake of imagining that he could overawe British soldiers, as he had defeated other armies, by throwing masses of troops upon them. His expectations were disappointed. The British army stood firm. Suffering fearful losses, exposed to a frightful fire, constantly attacked, never allowed to advance, the troops displayed the excellence of their discipline and the confidence which they reposed in their chief. They had foiled their adversaries' attack

CHAP. III.

before the Prussians' arrival on the field. Blucher and his troops turned a defeat into a rout. Napoleon galloped from the field on which he had lost an empire. The French army, defeated and disorganised, was scattered in every direction. The English and Prussians entered Paris as conquerors; and Wellington, as a crown to all his triumphs, had won the most decisive of his victories over the greatest of modern soldiers.

The Ministry.

The successes which the Duke of Wellington had achieved had had a happy influence on the fortunes of the ministry by whom he was employed. But, at the period at which this history commences, the duke was still absent from this country. He had been appointed to the command of the army of occupation, and soldiers of all the great Continental powers were under his orders. He was only relieved from the duty in 1817. On his return to England a vacancy was at once made for him in the Government, and he entered the ministry and the cabinet as Master-General of the Ordnance. The ministry undoubtedly gained from his accession to their councils. They had little to lean upon except their appreciation of his merits and their support of the war. Men still looked back with regret to the days in which Pitt had ruled his cabinet with a firm hand. Up to 1801 Pitt had been the strongest of modern ministers. The recollection of his earlier acts, of his leanings towards free trade, and of his alliance with the Reformers, had not been wholly obscured by the harsh measures of repression into which he had been driven by the excesses of the revolutionary party. The uniform failure of British armies on land had been redeemed by the brilliant naval victories of Camperdown, St. Vincent, and Nelson; while the union with Ireland, accomplished under circumstances of unparalleled difficulty, had crowned the achievements of the minister. At the commencement of the nineteenth century Pitt's administration seemed firmer than ever. Yet

the commencement of the nineteenth century witnessed its fall. Very justly and very properly his ministry desired to complete the union with Ireland by releasing the Roman Catholics from some of the political disabilities to which they were subject. George III. maintained that justice to the Roman Catholics involved a breach of his coronation oath, and refused to assent to the policy of the Government. Neither the king nor the cabinet would yield; and, as in 1801 a king was still stronger than a minister, Pitt resigned. His resignation involved the disunion of the Tory party. Addington, with some of Pitt's friends, formed a temporary and Protestant ministry; while Pitt, with others of his followers, maintained a neutral position. Addington signalised his accession to office by concluding a peace; and, while peace lasted, his rule was tolerated. But a peace thus made had no chance of permanence. War again broke out; and, with the outbreak of war, men began to clamour for the return of Pitt to power. After an interval Pitt resumed office. But he returned with only a portion of his former strength. Addington, irritated at his own humiliation, held aloof from him; George III., with indomitable obstinacy, refused to admit Fox into his counsels; and Lord Grenville declined to join a ministry from which Fox was excluded. With failing health and a breaking heart Pitt carried on the government for a few months. But Dundas was impeached; Austerlitz was lost; the pride of the minister was broken; the hopes of the minister were disappointed. Pitt died; and, at his death, all his enemies rallied under Lord Grenville's leadership; and the obstinate king had the mortification of accepting Fox as Foreign Minister.

The short Ministry of All the Talents held office for only a little more than a year; and that year represents the only occasion on which, from the rise of Pitt in 1783 to the resignation of the Duke of Wellington in 1830,

CHAP. III.

the Whig party succeeded in obtaining political power. As Byron wrote—

> Nought's permanent among the human race,
> Except the Whigs *not* getting into place.

The one solitary occasion, which formed the exception to Byron's rule, did not tend to reconcile the country to Whig ascendancy. The Administration of All the Talents is chiefly remembered now from the loss which the ministry and the country sustained in the death of Fox during its rule. Their measures are hardly worthy of serious attention. Windham's military service scheme alone obtained permanence Lord Henry Petty's finance was founded on a delusion; while the proposed concessions to the Roman Catholics, which ultimately destroyed the ministry, were ill-judged, because they were both unnecessary and premature. 'He had known many men,' said Sheridan, 'knock their heads against a wall, but he had never before heard of any man who collected the bricks and built the very wall, with an intention to knock out his own brains against it.' [1]

The dismissal of the Talents administration led to the formation of the remarkable ministry which, with some modifications, but in the main without change, governed Great Britain for the next twenty years. Yet, though this ministry was more permanent than any which had preceded it, it seemed, both at its outset and frequently during its continuance, on the eve of a fall. On its first formation it was supported by a minority, or at the best a slender majority, in the House of Commons. Two years and a half afterwards the retirement of its nominal chief and division among its members threatened its downfall. A little later on, the illness of the king, and the known preference of the Regent for the Whigs, made its fall apparently inevitable; and, when the

[1] Colchester, vol. ii. p. 109, and cf. Moore's *Sheridan*, vol. iii. p. 340.

favour of the Regent had at last been secured, the ministry was suddenly deprived of its second head; and the loss of its leader seemed to necessitate its immediate dissolution. But the Government had not succumbed at the retirement of the Duke of Portland or at the secession of Canning and Castlereagh. It had compelled the Regent to extend to it an ungrudging support; and it had repaired the loss which the death of Perceval had inflicted on it. Associated with the expedition to the Peninsula, every victory which Wellington had gained had strengthened its position. The Opposition, which had denounced the folly of the campaign, became weaker and weaker as the prospects of the allies became more and more hopeful.

The Duke of Portland.

The Duke of Portland, the first of the three heads under whom the Portland, Perceval, and Liverpool administration successively served, had had hereditary claims on the friendship of the House of Hanover. He was the great-grandson of the Dutch Count Bentinck, the favourite of William III. He had begun life, like the rest of his family, as a Whig, and had been chief of the famous Coalition Ministry, whose brief career had been terminated by the triumphant attacks of Pitt on Fox's India Bill. But the French Revolution had altered the views of the Whig chieftain. The duke, like Burke, dissented from the course which Fox pursued, and was rewarded by Pitt with the seals of the Home Office. From that time till the death of Pitt, in 1806, he continued a prominent member of Pitt's and Addington's administrations. His high rank and his long service gave him in 1807 claims for the lead to which none other of the Tory party could at that time aspire. But the duke's claims solely rested on his high rank and the length of his previous services. He had not naturally the talents which fit men to lead their fellow-men in troublous times; and age and disease had weakened the moderate abilities

CHAP. III.

which he had once possessed. Nominally the head of the ministry, he was virtually powerless in his own Cabinet. All the chiefs of departments exercised independent authority, and every one of them did what was right in his own eyes. The ministry managed to hold together while no great events occurred to give rise to differences of opinion among them. But the first expedition to the Peninsula, the convention with which it terminated, the glorious but disastrous campaign of Sir John Moore, and the attack on the Duke of York, raised questions which could not be settled without the authority of a strong leader. Two of the most prominent members of the Cabinet quarrelled and retired; the Duke of Portland resigned and died; and the premiership of a weakened administration devolved on Perceval, the leader of the House of Commons and Chancellor of the Exchequer.

Perceval.

No minister ever succeeded to a more apparently hopeless task than Perceval. Two of the foremost members of the Portland administration held aloof from him; Lord Sidmouth and his connection refused to join him; the Whig opposition declined to coalesce with him; his own followers doubted his prudence in going on; the king alone stood firm; and, before much more than a year was over, the king was deprived of all power to assist the minister. The miserable expedition to Walcheren had just terminated in disaster; the campaign in the Peninsula was assailed on every side as an impracticable and Quixotic enterprise; the selection of Sir Arthur Wellesley was regarded as a Tory job; and the abilities of the commander were ignored by almost everyone. After Perceval had been in office a little more than a year a commercial crisis of unparalleled magnitude diminished the resources of the country, and made the task of supporting the war almost impossible. During the whole of this period an Opposition, strong in numbers, strong in ability, were continually denouncing the ministry; while

no debater of even second-rate rank sat beside the minister. It was under these circumstances that Perceval conducted the government; and by his patriotic spirit and dexterity in debate succeeded in rallying his supporters, and in winning the confidence of the country. He died in 1812; and his death afforded the plainest proof of the strength which his presence had imparted to the ministry, since it immediately led to their defeat in Parliament. At the time at which he died his contemporaries imagined that his exertions and his talents had won for him lasting fame. Thirty years afterwards men only recollected that he had resisted emancipation, that he had resisted reform, and that he had occasionally stooped to defend an indefensible sinecure. Posterity forgot, and history overlooked, the zealous support which he had given to the war, and which forms his chief claim to the gratitude of his fellow-countrymen. So true it is that

> The evil that men do lives after them:
> The good is oft interrèd with their bones.

Lord Liverpool.

On Perceval's death the fall of the Tory Government seemed certain. An address was carried in the House of Commons for the formation of a strong administration; and attempts were made both to reconstruct the existing cabinet and to replace it with another. The ministry, however, failed to secure the adhesion of Lord Wellesley and Canning, to whom they in the first instance applied for assistance; and Lord Wellesley, in his turn, failed to form a government from among his own friends and the Whig party. No other alternative remained but the continuance of the existing ministry in office; and the Regent promoted Lord Liverpool to the post of Prime Minister. Robert Banks, second Earl of Liverpool, the eldest son of the first earl, was Prime Minister of this country for nearly fifteen years.[1] His father had com-

[1] For this account see Yonge's *Liverpool*, vol. i.

CHAP. III.

menced his political career as private secretary to Lord Bute; had become a Lord of the Admiralty under the Duke of Grafton, Secretary at War under Lord North, and a member of the Board of Trade under Pitt. Pitt raised him to the peerage as Lord Hawkesbury, and promoted him ten years later to the Earldom of Liverpool. The new earl was a competent statesman; he was an excellent father.[1] His son was sent, at a very early age, to the Charterhouse; from the Charterhouse he proceeded in due course to Oxford; from Oxford, where he made acquaintance with Canning, he started on a grand tour through the Low Countries, France, and Italy. On his return from abroad, while still a minor, he was elected for Sir James Lowther's borough of Appleby; and, after displaying some promise as a speaker, he was, when only twenty-three years of age, appointed by Pitt to a seat at the India Board.

Lord Hawkesbury's appointment by Pitt in 1793 to a situation at the India Board was the commencement of an official career which is probably unparalleled in the British annals. From 1793 to 1801 the young lord continued, first at the India Board, second as Master of the Mint, in a comparatively obscure position. On the formation of Addington's administration he was offered and accepted the seals of the Foreign Office. Pitt took occasion to compliment the new government on Hawkesbury's promotion, and spoke of the young nobleman's abilities in terms which, some critics thought, were sarcastic. Lord Hawkesbury, however, discharged the duties of his high office with credit. He laboured to

[1] Most people recollect the witty lines in which his son's resemblance to him was described:—

'Happy, happy, Mr. Jenkinson;
Happy, happy, Mr. Jenkinson;
I'm sure to you
Your lady's true,
For you have got a winking son!'

Lockhart's *Scott*, p. 73.

conclude the peace which was the main result of Addington's administration; and was not more responsible than the rest of his colleagues for its temporary character. Pitt, on resuming the seals of office in 1804, continued to retain Lord Hawkesbury's services, though he moved him from the Foreign Office, which he filled with Lord Harrowby, to the Home Department. Lord Hawkesbury, in his new office, displayed his usual industry and good sense; and acquired such a position in the cabinet that, on Pitt's death, he was selected by his colleagues to convey their resignations to the king. The king seems to have pressed Lord Hawkesbury to attempt the absolutely impossible task of carrying on the government himself. Lord Hawkesbury contented himself with securing the Wardenship of the Cinque Ports, which Pitt's death had vacated, and retired. It is difficult to see that Lord Hawkesbury had any claim to the sinecure which he thus obtained, or to justify his accepting it under the circumstances from the king.

Lord Hawkesbury had been continually in office for thirteen years. For a little more than a year he enjoyed a short interval of leisure. But, on the fall of the Talents administration, he again returned to his official duties at the Home Office, and presided over that department till the autumn of 1809. On the retirement of the Duke of Portland, Canning, and Castlereagh from the administration, Lord Liverpool—for in the interval he had succeeded to the earldom—undertook the still more important office of Secretary of State for War and the Colonies. In this capacity he was directly responsible for the conduct of the war, and was brought into immediate communication with Wellington. He continued to hold the office till the death of Perceval, when, after some delay, he became Prime Minister. He retained the Premiership till he was afflicted with the fatal seizure from which he never even imperfectly recovered.

CHAP. III.

Lord Liverpool, then, may be said to have passed the whole of his life in the service of the public. From his first appointment to the India Board in 1793, when he was only twenty-three years of age, to the fatal seizure, which terminated his political career in 1827, with the exception of a short interval of only a few months, he was constantly in office. It was his good fortune, as Secretary of State for the Foreign Office, to win the gratitude of his country by concluding the peace of Amiens; it was his good fortune as Secretary of State for the Colonies to supervise the operations of the Peninsular campaign; it was his good fortune as Prime Minister to conclude the most durable peace by which the perseverance of a nation or the ability of a commander had ever been rewarded. But, though Lord Liverpool's official career was, in proportion to his days, longer than that of any other British minister, and though his name is associated with some of the most important occurrences in the history of the world, he is not usually regarded as a great statesman. Respectable in everything that he undertook, he was eminent in nothing. His smooth and sensible oratory never rose to eloquence; his steady and business-like administration never displayed any genius. During his long career he excited no popular sympathy; but he aroused no aristocratic prejudices. His was eminently the temperament to deal with materials and constitutions as he found them. He had neither the audacity which attempts reform or the penetration which foresees its necessity. No repressive law was abolished, no popular change was accomplished, at his own instance, during his long administration. But the machinery of government was preserved unimpaired, the authority of the executive was largely, and perhaps needlessly, increased during his tenure of office.

Lord Eldon.

Lord Eldon was Lord Chancellor for even a longer period than that during which Lord Liverpool retained

the Premiership. He received his high office at the very commencement of the century; he retained it, with the exception of one short interval, during which he was in Opposition, till the close of Lord Liverpool's ministry. He served as Chancellor with five prime ministers, and he survived four out of the five. During his long political career he undoubtedly made a striking impression on the politics of his time. For twenty-five years his was the genius which withstood all reform, and violently resisted every change in the constitution of Parliament. By no means bigoted in his own religious views, he would not listen to any proposal for the relief either of the Roman Catholics or of the Dissenters. With a singularly kind heart, he saw no unkindness in punishing the most trivial offences with the extreme penalty of death. His peculiarly just mind discovered no injustice in withholding all share of political power from the great masses of his fellow-countrymen and the most important communities. When he was made Chief Justice he applied to the king, at Lady Eldon's instigation, for leave to wear no wig. 'No, no,' was George III.'s answer, 'I will have no innovations in my time.' [1] The dislike which the king entertained to innovation found ready sympathy in the new Chief Justice. Lord Eldon, throughout his long career, might have used the same words, 'I will have no innovations in my chancellorship.'

Though, however, he was narrow in his views, though his influence undoubtedly retarded the accomplishment of many necessary and beneficial reforms, Lord Eldon's name will always be remembered with honour. His eminent ability, his unflagging industry, his strict honesty, his unfailing consistency, his immovable loyalty, illustrate and adorn his public life: just as his genial manners, his excellent temper, and his cheerful, affectionate disposition endeared him to his family and his

[1] Twiss's *Eldon*, vol. i. p. 340.

CHAP. III.

friends. Lord Eldon, it must always be recollected to his honour, began life with small advantages. He was the younger son of a Newcastle tradesman, and obtained his education at the free grammar school of the town. His elder brother, William, subsequently famous as Lord Stowell, had been educated at the same place, and had obtained by his ability a scholarship, which had enabled him to proceed to Oxford. By William Scott's advice John Scott was rescued from trade in 1766, and sent to his elder brother at the university. But the wisdom of the proceeding seemed long doubtful. The first important step which was taken by the future chancellor, after leaving Oxford, was to provoke the animosity of his friends by running away with Miss Surtees. The elopement was certainly imprudent. The marriage, of course, compelled young Scott to vacate the fellowship which he had won at Oxford. He had no other means except a deputy professorship at Oxford to depend upon; he had not even definitely chosen a profession; and his health was seriously impaired. Fortunately for him his wife's family forgave him, and settled on him a small income, which the death of his own father subsequently increased. Still more fortunately Miss Surtees, besides possessing unusual beauty, made an excellent housekeeper and a most affectionate wife.

Seven years passed after Scott's marriage before his professional career was cheered by a ray of hope. After seven years had passed an extraordinary and unanticipated success, in the case of 'Ackroyd *v.* Smithson,' ensured his ultimate advancement. 'Young man,' said a solicitor to him as he left the court, 'your bread-and-butter is cut for life.'[1] The solicitor's prediction was fulfilled. Three years after his argument in 'Ackroyd *v.* Smithson' Scott received his silk gown. Almost at the same time he was elected, through Lord Weymouth's in-

[1] Twiss's *Eldon*, vol. i. p. 119.

terest, to represent the now disfranchised borough of Weobly in Parliament; and, after a Parliamentary career of five years, he was knighted and made Solicitor-General. Five years later, or in 1793, Sir John Scott became Attorney-General; in 1799 he was appointed Chief Justice of the Court of Common Pleas and made Lord Eldon. Lord Eldon filled his new office for a very brief period; but in that short time he discharged its duties with extraordinary ability. He promised to become one of the greatest common law judges which the country had ever seen. The necessities of political life, however, removed him almost immediately afterwards from the sphere for which he was most eminently qualified. Pitt resigned; Lord Loughborough was compelled to retire from the Chancellorship; and the king, who had already formed a very marked affection for Lord Eldon, insisted on the Chief Justice of the Court of Common Pleas succeeding Lord Loughborough. His majesty drew the seals from beneath the left side of his coat, saying, 'I give them to you from my heart.' [1]

Lord Eldon did not maintain in the Court of Chancery the high judicial reputation which he had acquired at the Common Pleas. An excessive prudence made him hesitate to decide. Hesitation produced delay and arrears; the business of his court became hopelessly encumbered with the vast accumulation of business which was the result of the chancellor's doubts. But, if the chancellor, in one sense, failed as a judge, he succeeded as a politician. He was, perhaps, the 'strongest' member of the Duke of Portland's administration; and the known affection with which George III. regarded him increased his influence. The time, indeed, came when Lord Eldon's influence declined. George III. was incapacitated; the country moved on; and Lord Eldon stood still. But, to the latest, when deserted by his old friends and laughed at for the opinions

[1] Twiss's *Eldon*, vol. i. p. 318.

CHAP. III.

which only a few months before they had cheered, the venerable lawyer continued the struggle. He stood almost alone in the breach, striving to repair it, while the rising tide of Emancipation and Reform was surging around him.

Lord Sidmouth.

Lord Sidmouth occupied a very different position, both in the cabinet and in the House of Lords, to that which was filled by his near connection, Lord Eldon.[1] He was an ex-prime minister; and, as an ex-prime minister, had a rank, in the estimation of the public, which was enjoyed by none other of Lord Liverpool's colleagues. He was the chief of a small but important party of friends and relatives of his own, whose support no ministry could easily spare. His father, Dr. Addington, a physician at Reading, married a Miss Hiley, the daughter of the head master of the Reading Grammar School. A successful practice induced Dr. Addington to move to London, where he became a fashionable physician, and where his son, the future minister, was born, in 1757. The boy was sent at an early age, to Cheam, where his master, Mr. Gilpin, formed a very high opinion of his parts, but a very low one of his industry. From Cheam he was moved to Winchester, where his master was Dr. Huntingford, and where he formed the acquaintance of 'Brother Bragge,' his future brother-in-law. From Winchester, after a short stay at Dr. Goodenough's, at Ealing, he passed on to Brasenose. The tutors of great men, in those days, were sometimes extravagantly rewarded. Dr. Huntingford became Bishop of Hereford; Dr. Goodenough Bishop of Carlisle.

Addington, after passing creditably through Oxford, studied for the bar. But he never applied himself seriously to his profession. Dr. Addington had been the favourite physician of the great Lord Chatham. Young

[1] Lord Eldon's niece, the daughter of Lord Stowell, was Lord Sidmouth's second wife. She was married to him in 1823.

Addington had grown up in close intimacy with William Pitt. The friend of Pitt was not likely to prefer Lincoln's Inn to St. Stephen's. Pitt became Prime Minister, and dissolved Parliament. Addington, whose sister was married to Mr. Sutton, the owner of New Park, became, through his brother-in-law's interest, member for Devizes. At first Addington's chief claim to Parliamentary distinction lay in the favour with which the Prime Minister regarded him. He spoke only rarely, but he applied himself actively to the business of committees. In consequence he acquired a considerable knowledge of the business of the House, and had therefore greater qualifications than his age and his experience would have suggested for the Speakership. Addington was only thirty-two years of age when Pitt selected him for this high dignity on Mr. Grenville's retirement from it. Yet, though he was untried and inexperienced, no one seems to have doubted his qualifications for the situation. Even his political opponents, though they opposed his election, declared through Sheridan that they 'were all very sorry to vote against' him. The result justified the choice of Pitt and the remark of Sheridan. Addington held the Speakership for nearly twelve years, and is universally admitted to have made an admirable Speaker.

The qualifications, however, which fit a man to preside over the House of Commons are not necessarily the same as those which are required for the government of a nation. The same partial preference which had induced Pitt to raise his old friend to the Speakership prompted him to name Addington as the most fitting successor to himself in 1801. Both parties, indeed, at the time, probably regarded the arrangement as provisional. The obstinacy of the king had made Pitt's resignation indispensable; and, till he could return to office, it was convenient that an intimate friend of his own should carry on the government. Provisional arrangements,

CHAP. III.

however, cannot always be terminated at the moment when their modification would be most convenient. Addington concluded a peace, which stamped his ministry with a character of its own. It is true that, on the resumption of hostilities, some of his own colleagues intrigued for the return of Pitt to power, and that the great bulk of the Tory party desired this arrangement. But Addington's resignation was no longer easy or possible. He had a majority at his back; he had the favour of the king; he had the cheers of his brother and brother-in-law Hiley Addington, and Bragge. He thought himself his friend's equal, and entitled to negotiate on equal terms with him. The friendship which had lasted between the two statesmen from childhood was violently broken; and its rupture occasioned far greater consequences than the separation of two friends. In its ultimate effects it divided the Tory party into two camps; and, but for the egregious folly of Whig statesmen, would have terminated the period of Tory ascendency.

Lord Grenville.

Lord Liverpool, Lord Eldon, and Lord Sidmouth were the three most prominent members of the administration in the House of Lords. Opposed to them in that house were two men endowed with singular capacity for business and unusual abilities. Lord Grenville had been already prime minister; Lord Grey was to become prime minister. Lord Grenville's influence was passing away; Lord Grey's influence was continually increasing. Lord Grenville was essentially the representative of the old Whigs; Lord Grey's name was to become the most honoured in the annals of the modern Whigs. The Grenvilles, whose political influence extended throughout the reign of George III., had been settled for generations at Wootton. In the early years of the eighteenth century Richard Grenville, the then head of the family, who was successively member for Andover and Buckingham, married one Hester, the daughter of Sir Richard

Temple, of Stowe, who gave her name to other Hesters, well known in the pages of history. Hester Temple's brother was made Lord Cobham, with remainder to his sister; and, as he died without issue, Mrs. Grenville succeeded to the barony. To her brother's barony she eventually added a higher title of her own. She was made Countess of Temple. Mr. Grenville and Lady Temple had six children. Her eldest son, Richard, was the famous Lord Temple who, on two occasions, interfered with Lord Chatham's taking office, and who is still thought by some authorities to have been no less a personage than 'Junius.' Her second son, George, was the famous minister whose insolence to George III. made him detested by the king, and whose obstinacy in proposing the Stamp Act lost the country its richest colony. Her third son, James, was the father of James, first and only Lord Glastonbury; and her daughter, Hester, made Lady Chatham in her own right, was the wife of the great Lord Chatham, and the mother of William Pitt. George Grenville, the Prime Minister, had three sons: George, who succeeded his uncle as Lord Temple, who became Marquis of Buckingham, and whose son was ultimately advanced to a dukedom; Thomas, first Lord of the Admiralty in the Talents administration; and William Wyndham, who became Prime Minister and Lord Grenville. It is doubtful whether any other woman who ever lived had so distinguished a posterity as Hester, Lady Temple. One of her sons became Prime Minister; another son refused the Premiership. Two of her grandsons became Prime Ministers; and two other grandsons, the second Lord Chatham and Thomas Grenville, held high political office. The honours of the peerage were freely bestowed on them; one of her descendants was promoted to the highest rank which a subject can attain. Yet no distinctions can preserve a race from dying out. Only one male descendant has lived to our own time to inherit

CHAP. III.

the varied dignities which Lady Temple's children and grandchildren had acquired. The title of Chatham is extinct; the title of Glastonbury is extinct. The present Duke of Buckingham, moreover, has no son to whom he can hand down the honours of his family. Most of the titles which he bears will, in all probability, die out at his death. The Earldom of Temple will pass under a special remainder to his sister's son.

At the period at which this history commences Lord Grenville was far the ablest representative of his influential family. Born in 1759, he was fifty-six years of age, the acknowledged head of the Whig party. In 1782 he commenced his Parliamentary career as a member of the House of Commons. Shortly afterwards he obtained, through his cousin Pitt's interest, the lucrative post of Paymaster of the Forces. In 1789, through the same interest, he was elected to the high dignity of the Speakership; and in 1790 he entered the cabinet as Secretary of State for the Home Department. From the time of his first entry into office till the date of Pitt's resignation he was known as one of the most industrious and able members of the administration. His near relationship to the Prime Minister extended the influence which his abilities would, under any circumstances, have commanded; and he acquired an authority which; with the exception of Pitt himself, was enjoyed by no other member of the cabinet.

Grenville retired with his cousin in 1801; but he did not resume office with Pitt in 1804. Up to a certain point, indeed, both these eminent men were agreed at that time. They were both of opinion that the necessities of the age required the formation of a ministry on a broad basis; and they both, consequently, desired to admit Charles Fox into the counsels of their sovereign. George III. objected, and the objections of the king led

to a separation between Pitt and Grenville. Pitt concluded that he had no alternative but submission. Grenville considered that the king, and not the minister, should be compelled to submit. Pitt, with a heavy heart, undertook the government without the assistance of Fox; and Fox's exclusion deprived him of the support of the Grenville interest. It is probable that Grenville was right in his anticipations. Several precedents might have been quoted to prove that George III., if he had kept his reason, would have yielded to the minister, and have consented to the admission of Fox into the cabinet. The experience of 1806, indeed, on the formation of the Coalition Ministry, makes this conclusion certain. But it is one thing to compel a king to submit, and another thing to risk driving a king out of his mind. Pitt, during the nineteenth century, was always dreading a return of the king's lunacy, and his apprehensions in this respect are known to have modified his policy. Grenville, on the contrary, seems to have considered the possible lunacy of the king a far lesser evil than the abandonment of his own opinions. He thought that the king should have been resisted in 1804. He himself resisted him in the commencement of 1807. His conclusions on the first of these occasions separated him for ever from Pitt, his conclusions on the second of them drove him for ever from office.

In one of his admirable essays Lord Brougham has remarked of Lord Grenville's junction with the Whigs that 'it was impossible to imagine a greater accession to the popular cause, unless Mr. Pitt himself had persevered in his desire of rejoining the standard under which his first and noblest battles were fought.' It is, however, permissible to doubt the justice of this opinion. Had Lord Grenville taken office under Pitt in 1804, he would undoubtedly, on Pitt's death in 1806, have succeeded to the lead of the Tory party. Had Lord Grenville been

CHAP. III.

vested with the first place in the Tory ranks, Lord Grey would have certainly led the Whigs from the date of Fox's death. The Tories would, in all probability, have been a little less reactionary if they had been led by Lord Grenville; the Whigs would have acted with more consistency and more freedom under the guidance of Lord Grey.

Lord Grey.

Lord Grey, who ultimately became the renovator of the Whig party, was a younger man than Lord Grenville. Born in 1764, he was sent to Eton about the time at which Lord Grenville left it. Without the elegance of his future colleague, he had far higher qualities. Brought at a very early age into Parliament, one of his first political acts was to support Pitt's proposals for Parliamentary Reform. With the support of Pitt he moved in the matter on his own account in 1792 and 1793; and with Pitt against him he introduced in 1797 a measure for the enfranchisement of copyholders and leaseholders in counties, and for the institution of household suffrage in boroughs. His proposal was rejected by a large majority; but from that date Grey's name was identified with the cause of Reform. Yet Grey had only rare opportunities of asserting his views. The king was opposed to him; the legislature was opposed to him; the people only felt a torpid interest in the subject. Grey himself was almost continuously in Opposition. The only occasion on which he enjoyed the fruits of office was during the brief existence of the Talents administration. At a critical period, too, his father's death raised him to the House of Peers. The change from the House of Commons, where the Whigs sorely missed his commanding eloquence, to the unsympathetic atmosphere of the House of Lords was not favourable to the young reformer. Everything, in short, seemed to conspire to deprive him of a successful career. Yet he must unquestionably be regarded as one of the most successful statesmen of the nineteenth century. His

political life is marked by a completeness and consistency, which distinguish it from the careers of all his contemporaries and successors. Peel, indeed, carried far more beneficial measures of relief than even Grey. But the great questions with which Peel's name is associated only mark the inconsistency of his opinions. Lord Russell deserved and received a share of the credit attaching to the Reform Bill of 1832; but Lord Russell's great success was attained on the threshold of his official life; and the statesman lived to see men younger than himself, imbued with sympathies for the popular cause which were stronger than his own, and was compelled to advise them to remember what he had done—to rest and be thankful. It was the especial good fortune of Lord Grey that he lived to see the success of all the great causes which he had advocated; that he lived to carry the greatest of them all in his own administration; and that, when the work of his life was done, he withdrew from the cares and anxieties of a political career. The greatest revolution which had been ever effected without bloodshedding was accomplished under his auspices; and the veteran had the satisfaction of knowing, in his honoured retirement, that his country unanimously approved the reform which he had been instrumental in passing.

The consistency of Lord Grey's career strikingly compares with the inconsistency of Lord Grenville's life. Lord Grey was above all things a reformer, and his opinions never changed. Lord Grenville began life with the same popular sympathies which animated Grey. Like Pitt, he modified his views, and became party to the various repressive measures which characterised the later years of his cousin's government. From the extreme of Toryism he passed over to his opponents; deserted Pitt; formed the Coalition Ministry of 1806; and assumed the lead of the Whig party. But, though nominally the leader of the Whig party, he had little in common with

CHAP. III.

the Whigs. After the conclusion of the war his brother, the Duke of Buckingham, was seeking for office under Lord Liverpool; and Lord Grenville himself was coquetting with the Tory Government. 'Where are the Grenvilles?' wrote Byron. 'Turned, as usual,' is the answer which he immediately gives to his own question. Lord Grey never turned throughout his long career. As minister in 1832 he concluded the work which he had commenced forty years previously.

During the reign of George III. the influence of the House of Commons was comparatively so small that the majority of every Government was composed of peers. On one occasion, during his reign, only one member of the cabinet had a seat in the House of Commons; and the only commoner who was thus distinguished was the near relation of a duke.[1] The influence of the House of Commons had risen since the days of the Duke of Newcastle's government; but the great majority of every ministry was still composed of peers. No member of Lord Liverpool's cabinet in the Lower House of Parliament had the ability of Lord Eldon. The leader of the Government in this House, Lord Castlereagh, was 'a man of sense, presence of mind and fortitude, which carried him through many an affair of critical moment, when finer talents would have stuck in the mire. He had been indifferently educated; and his mode of speaking being far from logical or correct, he was sometimes in danger of becoming almost ridiculous in despite of his lofty presence (which had all the grace of the Seymours) and his determined courage.'[2] He is said to have once achieved the extraordinary feat of concluding a speech with the monosyllable 'its'; and the story, whether it be true or no, testifies to the extreme clumsiness with which his sentences were composed. Lord Castlereagh was the eldest son of the

Lord Castlereagh.

[1] Mr. Pelham, in the Duke of Newcastle's administration.

[2] Sir Walter Scott, in Lockhart, p. 643.

first Earl and Marquis of Londonderry by his first wife, Sarah, daughter of Lord Hertford. His mother died when he was young, and his father married a second wife, a daughter of Lord Camden. Lord Castlereagh was educated at Armagh, and was subsequently sent to St. John's College, at Cambridge. His stay at the university was, however, short. He was removed to make what was then called the 'grand tour,' and visited the principal cities of France, Austria, and Italy. He returned to Ireland in 1790, just before he came of age. The Tory landlords of Down were anxious to contest the county with the representative of Lord Downshire, and desired to obtain Lord Castlereagh as their champion. Lord Londonderry threw himself heartily into the struggle. A contest, costly and severe even for those days, ensued, and resulted in a drawn battle. Each side gained one of the two seats. Lord Castlereagh[1] was returned with one of Lord Downshire's representatives. It is said that the contest cost Lord Londonderry 60,000*l.*,[2] and that the effects of it seriously crippled his lordship for the whole of his lifetime.

Lord Castlereagh had been compelled, during the progress of the election, to commit himself to a limited support of the claims of the Roman Catholics; and he therefore consented to the act of partial justice which gave the Roman Catholics of Ireland a vote for Parliamentary elections. This concession, slight as it was, seemed to pave the way for better times. Lord Fitzwilliam was sent as Lord Lieutenant to Ireland. He formed a Liberal administration, of which Grattan, the great Irish patriot, was a member; and the Irish Parliament was induced, by the promise of a liberal policy, to vote a

[1] It seemed convenient to name Lord Castlereagh from the first by the title by which he is best known. His father was not made an earl, and his son was not, therefore, properly styled Lord Castlereagh till some years afterwards.

[2] The *Ann. Reg.* says 30,000*l.*, vol. lxiv. p. 619.

CHAP. III.

very large supply for the purposes of the war. Lord Fitzwilliam's promised concessions were, however, regarded with disfavour in London. Pitt was compelled to disown and recall his Lord Lieutenant; and Lord Camden, with Pelham as his Chief Secretary, was sent in his place to Ireland. Pelham, either from mistaking his instructions or from over-zeal, committed an exactly opposite error to that of Lord Fitzwilliam. At the very outset of his career he pronounced a strong determination to resist all further concessions, and found it necessary or prudent in consequence to withdraw from his duties. In the absence of Pelham, and after the refusal of Perceval to take the situation, Lord Camden determined to avail himself of the services of his young connection, Lord Castlereagh. Castlereagh undertook to perform the duties of Chief Secretary during Pelham's absence. The Irish rebellion of 1798 almost immediately afterwards broke out. The outbreak taxed, to the very utmost, the resources of the Irish Government; and, though ultimately repressed at a horrible cost both of money and life,[1] its repression drew deserved attention to the administrative ability which Castlereagh had displayed. Lord Camden was replaced by Lord Cornwallis; but Lord Cornwallis continued to avail himself of Castlereagh's services. Though no Irishman had ever been made Chief Secretary for Ireland, Pitt was induced to break through the usual rule in Castlereagh's favour; and, on Pelham's actual retirement, Castlereagh was accordingly appointed to the office which he had virtually filled for the two preceding years.

In consequence of the rebellion of 1798 Pitt was induced to propose an union between Great Britain and

[1] Moore, in his life of Lord E. Fitzgerald, says at a cost of 20,000 Royalist and 50,000 rebel lives. Vol. ii. p. 203, note. Alison, in his life of Lord Castlereagh, says, on Lord Castlereagh's authority, of 30,000 lives and 3,000,000*l*. Vol. i. p. 73.

Ireland. Cornwallis and Castlereagh both clearly saw that the system under which Ireland was governed was crude and unstable. Nine-tenths of the population consisted of Roman Catholics and Presbyterians; and the remaining tenth, who were faithful to the Established Church, were alone eligible for every office in the state. It was evidently essential either to concede the power to the real majority; or to convert a minority into a majority, by fusing the Irish with the English. Such a fusion, it was clear, would subordinate the majority of Roman Catholics in Ireland to the still larger majority of Protestants in Great Britain. The course was taken, and the union resolved on. There was no great difficulty in persuading Great Britain to absorb a smaller country; but there was the greatest difficulty in inducing the smaller country to consent to its own absorption. The Government, in the Irish House of Commons, had no one but Castlereagh to rely on. The Opposition was led by Grattan, Ponsonby, and other debaters of great ability. Castlereagh could hardly be expected to fight on equal terms with such adversaries as these. Yet his superiors seem to have been fully satisfied with the exertions which he made. Though he was defeated, Parliament was dissolved, and the battle was renewed after a general election. Castlereagh had to contend a second time with the same opponents; but he was successful.

Success, however, in the contest which was thus terminated did not turn on Parliamentary qualifications alone. The union was effected by the most indiscriminate bribery; and in bribery the Government was certain to defeat the Opposition. The latter had nothing but money to rely upon. The former, in addition to lavish expenditure, had the whole patronage of the state at their disposal. One man wanted a peerage; a second an office; a third a pension. The Opposition were beaten by the

CHAP. III.

wholesale corruption of the Government, and the union was carried. It is creditable to Cornwallis and Castlereagh that they insisted on all the promises which they had made being faithfully carried out. But the apprenticeship which Castlereagh had thus served was, perhaps, the very worst which a young statesman could have gone through. He had spent his time, not in attempting to gain a logical victory over his opponents, but in computing the exact sum at which the support of each of them might be secured. Bribery, to be effective, requires dexterity and tact; but the man who succeeds in the art of corruption need not necessarily be qualified for the higher functions of statesmanship.

Canning.

While Lord Castlereagh was slowly acquiring experience and influence as Chief Secretary for Ireland a man, slightly his junior in point of years, who was destined to become at once his most formidable rival and most able ally, was gradually making his mark in the English House of Commons. George Canning was born in 1770 under the most unpropitious circumstances. His father, the son of an Irish country gentleman, had incurred the displeasure of his parents by contracting an imprudent marriage, and had unfortunately died, leaving his widow in great poverty, while his son was an infant. Mrs. Canning, left to her own resources, went on the stage, and soon afterwards contracted a second marriage with an actor.[1] Her second husband was a creditable performer in his profession, but dissolute and intemperate. Her son's prospects appeared under such circumstances deplorable. Happily, however, for himself, his family, and his country, his uncle, Mr. Stratford Canning, interfered and rescued the lad from the inevitable consequences of a training in his mother's home. A small Irish estate was settled on the boy, the proceeds of which were sufficient to pay for his education. England probably owes to Mr. Stratford

[1] *Ann. Reg.*, vol. lxix. p. 478.

Canning's generous friendship the most brilliant minister of the nineteenth century. CHAP. III.

Canning, at a very early age, justified the kindness which his uncle had shown to him. He was, perhaps, the most distinguished boy ever known at Eton. His compositions excited marked admiration among men who recollected Lord Wellesley's Latin verses. Nor was it in the dead languages alone that Canning acquired a reputation at school. His contributions to the 'Microcosm' made him known as a brilliant and ready writer. Canning proceeded from Eton to Oxford, where his career was equally successful. His reputation, in fact, became so great that each of the political parties endeavoured to secure the advantage of his assistance. While he was still at Oxford, Sheridan introduced him to Fox, and obtained for him an invitation to the great Whig houses. In 1793 Pitt made him a direct offer of a seat in Parliament, and in 1796 appointed him Under-Secretary of State at the Foreign Office.

Those who desire to appreciate the value of Canning's official services at this period should refer to the speech which he delivered in 1798 on Tierney's motion for a separate peace with France. The report of the speech was probably corrected by the speaker, and is, therefore, given far more accurately and far more fully than was usual at that time. But it is one of the most brilliant and exhaustive essays ever spoken by a young minister only twenty-eight years old.[1] Nor was it in Parliament alone that Canning was proving himself a useful ally to the minister. Outside the House he was contributing to the 'Anti-Jacobin' the series of humorous pieces, both in poetry and prose, which almost induce the regret that the author should have ever exchanged literature for politics. 'The Friend of Humanity and the Knifegrinder,' 'The Rovers,' and other contributions show that Canning was as great a

[1] Hansard, *History*, vol. xxxiv. p. 33.

CHAP. III.

master of words as Byron; that Hood did not exceed him in humour.

Up to 1801, then, Castlereagh and Canning, acting under the same great leader, had been steadily laying, in different spheres, the foundations of their future eminence. In 1801 they both retired from office with Pitt. Castlereagh was soon afterwards induced to accept a high position under Addington. Canning would not, probably, under any circumstances have consented to serve under 'the Doctor.' He was perpetually urging Pitt to attack the feeble ministry; he was assailing it himself with all the power of his brilliant and sarcastic pen. Addington, not unnaturally, resented the violent onslaughts which Pitt's brilliant disciple was making on him; and, not unreasonably, concluded that Pitt himself approved the attack. The first steps were thus taken, which ultimately led to a new schism in the Tory party, and which produced an immediate difference between Pitt and Addington. Shattered by attacks from all sides, Addington fell. The immediate effect of his fall was the restoration of Pitt to power. Canning and Castlereagh both occupied important positions in the new ministry: Canning, as Treasurer of the Navy; Castlereagh, as President of the Board of Control. The ministry had considerable strength on the Treasury Bench. Pitt, Hawkesbury, Perceval, Canning, and Castlereagh formed a phalanx of unusual—possibly unprecedented—strength. But the government gained little credit. It had no consistency except that which it derived from Pitt's presence. It crumbled into fragments when Pitt died.

During the rule of the Talents administration the leaders of the Tory party ought undoubtedly to have endeavoured to reconcile their differences. They did nothing of the kind; and, in consequence, when they were unexpectedly required to resume power in 1807, they were wholly unprepared for it. They agreed, indeed, on serving under the Duke of Portland, whom the

king had selected as Prime Minister; and Lord Hawkesbury, Canning, and Castlereagh agreed to serve under Perceval in the House of Commons. Canning was partly reconciled to the arrangement by the very near connection which he enjoyed with the new prime minister. He and Lord Titchfield, the duke's eldest son, had married two sisters, the daughters of a General Scott; and the marriage had given Canning a large fortune,[1] and the concurrent advantage of easy access to the duke. For a time things went on tolerably smoothly. Every minister managed the affairs of his own department; and the duke, debilitated with disease, exercised merely a nominal control over the ministry. An arrangement of this kind did very well while no great question arose; but it was almost certain to be disturbed when any subject provoking differences of opinion came up for discussion. Subjects of this character were, of course, sure to arise. The convention of Cintra, the attack on the Duke of York, the expedition of Sir John Moore, and the future of Portugal, all created differences of opinion; and on all of them Canning and Castlereagh formed different views. Canning took the extreme step of tendering his resignation in March 1809; and the able letter in which he tendered it, though it contains no distinct charge against anyone, was understood by the prime minister and the king as a complaint against Castlereagh. The king good-naturedly endeavoured to patch up a quarrel which was already irremediable; the duke foolishly attempted to conceal the whole matter from the parties most nearly concerned in it. King and Duke succeeded, by these means, in postponing the difficulty for about four months. It recurred then in a worse form than ever. It led to a duel between Castlereagh and Canning, attended with serious but fortunately without fatal consequences; it compelled the

[1] The marriage was announced in Aris's *Birmingham Gazette* as 'with 100,000*l.* fortune.' See Grant's *Newspaper Press*, vol. i. p. 130.

CHAP. III.

Duke of Portland to retire from the ministry; it broke up the Tory party.

There were two persons, on the Duke of Portland's retirement, who aspired to the lead of the Tory party. Perceval had led the House of Commons for two years and a half. For the sake of his party, he had made the sacrifice of abandoning his profession. He was a very able debater, and a very popular minister. Canning, on the contrary, had a fervid eloquence to which Perceval had no claim. He conceived that he was necessary to the ministry, and that it could not stand without him. However willing he had been to serve under Perceval, while a near connection of his own was prime minister, he fancied that the Duke of Portland's retirement altered his status and made a continuance of this arrangement impossible. Perceval, on the other hand, very naturally concluded that, after he had led the House of Commons for two years and a half, he could not act as Canning's lieutenant. Both statesmen had a remedy for the difficulty. Perceval thought it possible, though in other respects undesirable, to place some neutral nobleman in the Duke of Portland's shoes, and resuscitate the government very much in its original form. Canning hoped to persuade Perceval to take a peerage, with the presidency of the Council or the Chancellorship, and thus gild his colleague's retirement with promotion and a coronet. Neither Canning nor Perceval was the least inclined to accept the view of the other. Perceval refused the gilded bait, and resolutely declined to oust Lord Eldon. Canning insisted on the necessity of the prime minister being in the House of Commons, and declined to act under a neutral nobleman. The duel between Castlereagh and himself ensued. The king was indignant at two of his ministers fighting; and Perceval was compelled to supplement the remnant of a ministry with the best materials at his disposal.

Canning's conduct on this occasion has been warmly defended by his later admirers. At the time hardly anyone stood up for him. Those who admired his abilities regretted what he had done; those who were either jealous of him or disliked him condemned him in the strongest language. But his conduct in the long run proved eminently beneficial to Perceval. Canning's own friends thought that Perceval had been treated ill, and rallied round him; and the strength which he thus gained enabled his ministry to resist the first onslaught on it. On the other hand, Canning's retirement in 1809 destroyed his own opportunity. Had he consented to serve under Perceval in 1809 he would undoubtedly have succeeded Perceval as prime minister in 1812. His withdrawal from the ministry in 1809 enabled Castlereagh to assume the lead in 1812. It excluded Canning from office, the first object of his ambition, for nearly seven years. At the time at which this history opens he was employed on a special mission abroad. On his return, in 1816, he accepted the presidency of the Board of Control. The minister, who might have had the choice of any office, was compelled to content himself with a comparatively obscure department. The statesman who declined to serve under Perceval was compelled to serve under Perceval's subordinate, Castlereagh. 'How striking is Canning's example!' wrote Wilberforce. 'Had he fairly joined Perceval on the Duke of Portland's death, as Perceval offered, he would now have been the acknowledged head, and supported as such. But his ambitious policy threw him out, and he sunk infinitely in public estimation, and has since with difficulty kept buoyant.'[1] 'As for Canning,' wrote another contemporary, himself one of the minister's warmest friends, 'with his immense talent, wit, and eloquence, he unhappily wants prudence and patience, and in his eager desire to scramble to the

[1] Wilberforce, vol. iv. p. 33.

CHAP. III.

highest point is not sufficiently select as to his assistants.'[1] 'Voltaire observes,' wrote a third of Canning's friends, 'that men succeed less by their talents than their character. He is comparing Mazarin and de Retz. Walpole and Bolingbroke make a similar pair in the last century. Castlereagh and Canning are remarkable examples of the truth of the maxim which our own days have furnished.'[2]

The ministry had leaders of considerable eminence in Castlereagh and Canning. The nominal lead of the Opposition was held by a man who never acquired any great Parliamentary distinction in England. George Ponsonby was the grandson of the first Earl of Bessborough. His father, John Ponsonby, Lord Bessborough's second son, married a daughter of the Duke of Devonshire, and became Speaker of the Irish House of Commons. John Ponsonby's second and most distinguished son, George, received a lucrative appointment from the Rockingham administration, but was removed from it by Lord Buckingham in 1787. Vexation at the loss of his office drove him into a political career, and he obtained a seat in the Irish House of Commons. Though the Opposition, to which he allied himself, was led by such men as Grattan and Flood, he succeeded in attaining distinction. The distinction which he gained commended him to the notice of the Whigs, and, on the Talents administration coming into office, he was made Lord Chancellor of Ireland. One Grenville had driven him into politics by depriving him of his appointment; another Grenville had rewarded his support with a much higher situation. The Talents administration fell in the spring of 1807.

Ponsonby.

[1] Sir Walter Scott's Diary, in Lockhart, p. 658.

[2] Ward's correspondence with the Bishop of Llandaff, p. 301.

Almost as severe is Sir Walter's record of his friend's death. 'The death of the premier is announced—late George Canning—the witty, the accomplished, the ambitious; he who had toiled thirty years, and involved himself in the most harassing discussions to attain this dizzy height; he who had held it for three months of intrigue and obloquy—and now a heap of dust, and that is all.' Lockhart, p. 662.

Lord Howick, who had succeeded Fox in the lead of the House of Commons, was removed, in consequence of his father's death, to the House of Peers; and the Whigs were in need of a leader. Sheridan, far the ablest of them, was too involved in his pecuniary circumstances to be thought of. Tierney had great claims on the party, but he did not enjoy the confidence of Lord Grenville. Whitbread, though very honest, very sincere, and very acute, had hardly the social position which would have qualified him for the lead. He was a brewer; and the Whigs were not prepared to follow a tradesman. A process of exhaustion compelled the Whigs to think of Ponsonby; and Ponsonby was, accordingly, invested with the leadership of his party. For the first and probably last time in history the House of Commons was led by two lawyers. An ex-attorney-general on one side; an ex-Irish chancellor on the other.

Ponsonby never made any great mark as leader; but, on the other hand, he excited no illwill. 'His language and manners were those of a gentleman; and, disdaining a flowery and figurative diction, he only aimed at stating arguments fully and forcibly, in which he often succeeded.'[1] But, while Ponsonby was thus obtaining a limited success, a much greater orator was rapidly extending the reputation which he had already acquired in another place. Henry Grattan, the great Irish patriot, was born in Dublin, in 1746. His father was a barrister, and Recorder of Dublin. The son received his education at Trinity, where he became acquainted with Fitzgibbon, and where he gained the highest honours. In 1772 he followed his father's footsteps, and was called to the bar. But he made no figure in his profession, and never seriously attended to it. Some few years after his call an accidental circumstance introduced him to Lord Charlemont. Lord Charlemont was, at that time, looking out for some

Grattan.

[1] *Ann. Reg.*, vol. lix. p. 145.

CHAP. III.

promising young man capable of expounding the grievances of Ireland in the Irish House of Commons. Flood had seceded from the popular cause, and had accepted a lucrative office under the Irish government. Ireland had thus been deserted in the hour of her need and of her opportunity by her most powerful advocate. The need of Ireland was indeed great. Her share of the cost of the American war had exhausted her treasury; the events of the war had destroyed her linen trade; her provision trade had been ruined by the injudicious legislation of the English Parliament. Religious animosity, in its worst form, distracted the population. A small minority of Protestants possessed all the power; a vast majority of Roman Catholics were ground down and oppressed. No papist was allowed to purchase real property; no Protestant was allowed to hold real property in trust for papists; no papist was allowed to be in a line of entail; no papist could take lands on lease for a period of thirty-one years and upwards. If the profits of a papist farmer exceeded a certain sum they could be claimed by any Protestant who discovered the excess. No Protestant was allowed to marry a papist. A priest marrying a papist to a Protestant was liable to be hanged. The wife of a papist, adopting the Protestant religion, was entitled to an increased jointure. A barrister or solicitor, marrying a papist, incurred the disqualifications of a papist. A papist was not allowed to live in certain specified towns; he could not vote in a parliamentary election; he could not vote at a vestry meeting; he could hold no office, civil or military; he could not serve on a grand jury; he could not act either as high or petty constable. Such were some of the laws which the arrogance, the injustice, and the folly of a Protestant minority imposed on a Roman Catholic majority less than a hundred years ago.

But, if the needs of Ireland were great, her opportunity was extraordinary. England had committed herself

to the hopeless task of subduing America, and had no troops to spare for the rebellious subjects nearer home, whom she disdained to conciliate. Ireland, under the pretext of protecting her own shores, filled the streets of her capital with armed volunteers. Her Senate, sharing the enthusiasm which had called her people to arms, passed, on Grattan's eloquent appeal, the resolutions of 1779 and 1782, the former securing the country the advantage of free trade, the latter obtaining for her self-government. A grateful Senate zealously rewarded the eloquent leader under whom such triumphs had been achieved. It was proposed to vote 100,000*l.* to Grattan in testimony of his services; Grattan's own moderation limited the grant to 50,000*l.* Grattan, for the moment, was the most popular among Irishmen. But the Irish are as fickle in their applause as they are inconstant in their labours. Flood rose in the house to cast a slur on Grattan's great victory. He had repealed the Act of George I. which had deprived Ireland of her right of self-government. But, according to Flood, the Act of George I. was only declaratory of the right of the English Parliament to legislate for Ireland. Its enactment had settled nothing; its repeal had altered nothing. Grattan warmly defended his own policy. Flood keenly strove to outbid his rival. Grattan twitted Flood with his place; Flood retorted on Grattan that he had accepted money. The contention was so warm that it nearly passed from words to blows. Nothing but the intervention of the House itself prevented a duel. The great Irish Revolution had characteristically ended in an Irish row.

So closed the greatest episode in Grattan's career. When the union was proposed he was living near London, in comparative retirement, and in bad health. His country, in its necessity, thought of the great orator whom it had by turns adored and despised. Grattan was

CHAP. III.

urged to set out for Ireland; and, though there was considerable risk to his health in the journey, and possible peril to his life from the animosities of his fellow-countrymen, he at once returned to Dublin. Elected for Wicklow, he took his seat amidst the enthusiasm of the House, and, though evidently ill and compelled to sit, delivered one of his most brilliant speeches. A violent attack was immediately made on him by Corry, the Irish Chancellor of the Exchequer. Grattan resented the language; a hostile meeting ensued, and Corry was wounded. It was afterwards stated that Grattan had been elected at twelve, that he had been received by the House at four, and that he had wounded Corry at eight of the same day. Some years elapsed before Grattan sought a seat in the English House of Commons. Far the most eloquent man on the Liberal benches, he never aspired to any great Parliamentary distinction. He devoted himself to urging the claims of his Roman Catholic fellow-citizens; and never was a just cause illustrated and adorned by a more able exponent. Grattan did not live to see the victory of his principles; but a Parliament, which admired the orator who had not been able to convince them, voted him the highest honours. The great Irish patriot sleeps among the mighty English dead in Westminster Abbey. The statue of the great Irish orator stands in the vestibule of the British Parliament. But the grave at Westminster and the statue at St. Stephen's do not form the most enduring monument to Grattan's fame. History, when she records the emancipation of the Roman Catholics, will always associate this act of justice with the name of Grattan.[1]

The Irish in the House of Commons.

A short fifteen years had elapsed since the union. The smaller nation had been absorbed in the larger against its will. And what was the result? The leader of the Government in the House of Commons was the eldest son of

[1] *Ann. Reg.*, 1820, p. 1174; Parnell's *Hist. of the Penal Laws.*

an Irish peer! The leader of the Opposition was the grandson of an Irish peer! The most eloquent orator on the ministerial benches was the grandson of an Irish country gentleman! The most eloquent orator on the Opposition benches was the great Irish patriot! The Irish, amidst all their despondency, might have exclaimed with the Roman poet— CHAP. III.

> Græcia capta ferum victorem cepit, et artes
> Intulit agresti Latio.

No other member of the House of Commons in 1816 could be ranked with either Canning or Castlereagh, Ponsonby or Grattan. In addition to Castlereagh and Canning, three other members of the Cabinet, Vansittart, Bathurst, and Pole, held seats in the House of Commons; while three subordinate members of the ministry, Robinson, Peel, and Palmerston, all of whom ultimately became prime ministers, had seats on the Treasury Bench. The time had not yet arrived when Peel and Palmerston had proved their mettle, and Castlereagh was consequently compelled to rely on the other four, Bathurst, Vansittart, Robinson, and Pole. What these four were may be inferred from the contemptuous expression of a close observer: 'I look on Bathurst, Vansittart, Robinson, and Pole as nothing;' or from the more elaborate explanation which the same writer subsequently gave of this sentiment: 'Van does not speak much but upon his own business. Bathurst is not much listened to, and is conscious of it. Pole rarely speaks, but when he does is always in a passion; and as to Robinson, he seems to do nothing but occasionally answer a question on trade. It is, therefore, cruel of the Opposition (as Walter Scott once told Morritt) to plague "poor dumb creatures."'[1] Vansittart.

Vansittart deserves the first place among these four

[1] Mr. Wilbraham to Lord Colchester. Colchester, vol. iii. pp. 163 and 201.

CHAP. III.

statesmen. He was Chancellor of the Exchequer, and, as Chancellor of the Exchequer, he had greater opportunities of distinguishing himself than almost any man who ever lived. He became finance minister on Perceval's death in 1812. He filled this position till 1823. For nearly eleven years, therefore, he was nominally responsible for the financial arrangements of the country; and these eleven years were financially the most critical that England ever saw. The three first years of his administration witnessed the conclusion of the fearful war in which this country had been so long engaged. The eight last years of his administration were memorable for profound peace. During the former of these periods a financier had abundant opportunities of displaying his resources; during the latter of them a finance minister had still greater opportunities of establishing a reputation for ability. Vansittart never showed any dexterity in devising taxation; he was equally incapable of perceiving the advantage of dispensing with it. His long rule at the Exchequer is not associated with a single measure of any importance. The repeal of the income tax in 1816 was carried, in his face, by the victory of the Opposition; the war malt tax was surrendered, against the minister's will, to allay the discontent of the country gentlemen; the return to cash payments was conducted under the guidance of an independent member. 'Nick,' as he was familiarly styled by some of his friends, or 'Van,' as he was nicknamed by others, was universally popular, but he was feared by no one. After eleven years' service as Chancellor of the Exchequer he was dismissed from his office by a letter in the handwriting of Lord Liverpool's private secretary.[1]

Nicholas Vansittart was born in 1766. His father was Governor of Bengal, his mother a daughter of Nicholas Morse, Governor of Madras. He entered Parliament to-

[1] Colchester, vol. iii. p. 272.

wards the close of the eighteenth century, and was selected in 1801 for a subordinate situation, the Secretaryship to the Treasury, in Addington's Administration. Brought into office by Addington, he retired with his chief, and thenceforward his fortunes were associated with those of Lord Sidmouth. Pitt in 1805 conferred on him the Irish secretaryship. In the Talents administration Vansittart returned to his old post as one of the Joint Secretaries of the Treasury. Perceval in 1809 offered him the Chancellorship of the Exchequer; but Vansittart very creditably refused to desert Lord Sidmouth, and declined the tempting offer. Nearly three years elapsed before, on Perceval's death, Lord Sidmouth joined the ministry as Home Secretary, and Vansittart obtained the situation which he had declined in 1809. But he brought the ministry little real strength. Industrious and plodding, he had made an excellent Secretary to the Treasury; but he had neither the knowledge of finance nor the dexterity in debate which would have qualified him for the post which by a strange fate he occupied for a longer period than any of his successors. He had so little weight in the House that a critic could write him down as 'nothing.' He had so little influence in the Cabinet that he ultimately received an almost contemptuous dismissal.[1]

CHAP. III.

Bathurst, like Vansittart, owed his position in the ministry not to any talent of his own, but to the friendship of Lord Sidmouth. His history was singular. His father, Benjamin Bathurst, was twice married. By his first wife, Finetta Poole, he had twenty-two children. Poor Finetta probably imagined that she had done her duty in this world, and died. Her husband consoled himself by marrying Catherine Brodrick, and Catherine presented him with fourteen more children. Benjamin Bathurst had actually had thirty-six children by

Bathurst.

[1] Vide Memoir of Vansittart in *Ann. Reg.* 1851; and Colchester, vol iii. p. 272.

CHAP. III.

his two wives. But twenty-one out of the first brood of twenty-two died without descendants, and the Lydney estate, which Benjamin had possessed, passed away to the issue of his daughter Anne, who had some years previously married a Mr. Bragge. Anne's eldest son, Charles Bragge, had been sent as a boy to Winchester. There he had had the good fortune to form acquaintance with Henry Addington. Henry Addington and Charles Bragge became firm friends, and Bragge cemented their friendship by marrying Addington's sister. 'Brother Bragge's' fortune was practically made by his marriage. Addington became Prime Minister, and Bragge was made Treasurer of the Navy and Secretary of War. In the Talents administration he became Master of the Mint. Perceval offered him a seat in the Cabinet in the autumn of 1809; but Bathurst, like Vansittart, refused to desert Lord Sidmouth. He was appointed in 1812 to the Duchy of Lancaster.

Lord Sidmouth's brother-in-law 'Bragge,' and his brother, Hiley Addington, were the two politicians with whom Lord Sidmouth's name is most closely associated. They suggested the epigram with which Addington was taunted in 1804 :—

> When his periods hobble vilely,
> What 'hear him'! burst from brother Hiley!
> When his faltering periods lag,
> Hark to the cheers of Brother Bragge.[1]

But Brother Bragge was Brother Bragge no longer. His mother's twenty-one brothers and sisters were all dead, and he had himself succeeded to his grandfather's patrimonial estates at Lydney, and to his grandfather's name. Bragge-Bathurst, or Bathurst, as he was thenceforward usually called, did not, however, owe everything to his marriage with Lord Sidmouth's sister. He must have had higher qualities of his own which his incapacity in

[1] Buckingham's *Geo. IV.*, vol. ii. p. 340.

debate has partially obscured. Perceval said of him in 1805 he is 'a man of sterling worth, as a man of business as well as a gentleman.' It was Canning's opinion that 'Bathurst was an able man, and an acquisition to any party.'[1] As Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, however, Bathurst could have found little room for the display of his qualities as a man of business. His colleagues must have often wished that he had a little less sense and a little more eloquence.

Robinson.

Frederick Robinson was a younger man than any of those who have hitherto been mentioned. The second son of the second Lord Grantham, he inherited a taste for political life. Born in 1782, at the termination of the war he had not completed the thirty-third year of his age, and he owed the position, which he had already attained in the political world, more to the accident of his birth than to any qualities of his own. Robinson had been educated at Harrow and at Cambridge; he had become private secretary to Lord Hardwicke, the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland under Addington's Administration, before he was of age. Perceval introduced him to responsible office as Under Secretary of the Colonies and as a Lord of the Admiralty. After Perceval's death in 1812, he was promoted to the Vice-Presidency of the Board of Trade. He still occupied this subordinate position at the close of the war, but he was already regarded as one of the most probable recipients of political promotion. Few people, indeed, could have foreseen how rapid his advancement was to become. He became President of the Board of Trade in 1818, Chancellor of the Exchequer in 1823, Secretary of State for the Colonies and Lord Goderich in 1827, and Prime Minister a few months afterwards. 'An easy-going cob accustomed to single or double harness, quiet under the

[1] Perceval's *Memoirs*, vol. i. p. 149. Colchester, vol. ii. p. 180.

CHAP. III.

saddle, and having no objection to the plough, the harrow, or the mill.'[1]

Robinson must have had some qualifications, besides his birth, to win for him these rapid promotions, but it is almost impossible for the historian to detect where these qualifications lay. 'He was not quick, he was wanting in decision, he saw the end long before he saw the means, and his too sanguine hopes and self-complaisant disposition often led him into difficulties for which there was no escape without ridicule.'[2] The serene composure with which, in a period of unprecedented distress, he expounded his budgets won for him the name of Prosperity Robinson. His feeble good-nature subsequently acquired for him the nickname of 'Goody Goderich.' After rising to the very highest station in the State, he fell, and became absolutely insignificant. Succeeding to another title, men forgot that the amiable nobleman, whom they knew as Lord Ripon, had once been nick-named Prosperity Robinson and Goody Goderich; they were utterly oblivious of the fact that in the days of their fathers he had filled many offices in the State and had been Prime Minister. 'Who was Lord Ripon?' was the question in 1859, when the ex-Prime Minister died.[3]

Such were the three men on whom Castlereagh and Canning mainly relied in the session of 1816. There were indeed three other statesmen who held subordinate situations in the ministry, who had higher qualifications, and who eventually acquired greater distinction, than Bathurst, Vansittart and Robinson. But a long period passed before Huskisson, Peel, or Palmerston, were admitted into the Cabinet; and it will therefore be convenient to defer an account of these men to a later period of this history. The opposition side of the House had far more ability at its disposal. Ponsonby and Grattan were indeed hardly equal to Castlereagh and Canning. But

[1] *Ann. Reg.* 1859, p. 476. [2] Ibid. p. 475. [3] Ibid. p. 476.

Castlereagh and Canning had no such subordinates to rely on as Tierney, Whitbread, Brougham, Romilly, and Horner. It was the misfortune of the Whig party to lose four of its strongest representatives, Ponsonby, Whitbread, Romilly and Horner, at the most critical period of its history, almost immediately after the conclusion of the war. Tierney and Brougham are therefore the only two of these personages who exercised any lasting influence on English politics.

Tierney.

Tierney's career illustrates, in a very striking way, the jealousy which the Whigs entertained of new men. Had he been the son of a country gentleman, or the distant relative of a peer, he would undoubtedly have succeeded to the lead of the Whig party on Fox's death in 1806, and he would probably have left a very great name behind him in the annals of the Whigs. Being only the son of a Spanish merchant, he never acquired the confidence of his party. He held office three times in his life, once under Addington in 1803, once under the Talents administration in 1806, and once under Canning in 1827. Nothing but his wealth secured him a seat in Parliament, nothing but the death of all his rivals gained him ultimately the nominal lead of the Whig party.[1] He represented in the course of his career Colchester, Southwark, Athlone, Bandon Bridge, Appleby, and Knaresborough. His elections must have cost him a fortune. At Colchester there was a double return; he only gained his seat for Southwark, which he had lost after a costly contest, by a costly petition. In 1807 he offered Lord Abingdon's trustees 10,000*l.* for the two

[1] The lead which he enjoyed was only nominal. The Grenvillites can hardly be said to have acted with him, At the very commencement of 1818 Wynn, Stanhope, and Phillimore quietly seceded from the Opposition, and endeavoured to form the nucleus of a third party: Fremantle and Banks became their allies; and other moderate Whigs were disposed to flirt with them.—*Memoirs of Regency*, vol. ii. pp. 211, 226, 233. The extravagant price at which the services of the third party were ultimately secured by the Tory Government will be related further on.

CHAP. III.

seats at Westbury.[1] Expenditure of this lavish description did not however obtain for him any compensating advantages. He never filled any higher office than the Presidency of the Board of Control; he never held any office for twelve months in succession; his name has almost dropped out of history; and the circumstance for which he is now best remembered is the duel which he once fought with Pitt.

Yet Tierney was one of the very last statesmen who deserved to be forgotten. He lived amongst a race of parliamentary giants, and under such circumstances even he made his mark. 'Addington used to say that there was no one whose Parliamentary talents he envied more than Tierney's, as he always expressed his meaning in the clearest manner, and said neither more nor less than he intended.'[2] His eloquence was colloquial, he was unrivalled in restating the argument of an opponent and turning it to ridicule. Men wondered as they listened to him how they themselves could have failed to detect the absurdity of the reasoning which was thus consummately exposed.[3] His great powers of sarcasm, his admirably simple language, his readiness and dexterity, made him a particularly efficient debater. When Fox seceded from Parliament in 1798, Tierney supplied his place and managed by the vehemence of his attacks to maintain a show of opposition. Yet it was humorously said at that time, that the opposition generally went home to dinner with Tyrwhit Jones in his coach. 'Ponsonby reinstated in the nominal lead of the opposition,' wrote Speaker Abbot in January, 1810, but, he added, 'Tierney the efficient man on that side.'[4]

Brougham.

Brougham was an abler man than Tierney, and a far more formidable opponent to his adversaries. Yet, like Tierney, he never quite achieved the distinction which his

[1] Romilly, vol. ii. p. 200.
[2] Sidmouth, vol. ii. p. 135.
[3] Memoir, *Ann. Reg.*, 1830.
[4] Colchester, vol. ii. p. 225.

abilities thoroughly deserved. In one sense he had more brilliant powers than any of his contemporaries. There were men among them who could beat him on any given subject, but there was no one who had so extended an acquaintance with so many matters. He was ready to discuss a scientific problem with Playfair, to argue a point of law with Copley, or a question of policy with Canning. He could make a speech with the same facility with which he could write an article; and he could write an article as easily as another man could write a letter. His physical strength admirably assisted his extraordinary intellectual power. During the Yorkshire election he spent his days, from nine till four, arguing cases in court; his evenings, from four till twelve, in canvassing the county; and after midnight he commenced reading his briefs for the work of the morrow. Yet, with all this amazing physical and intellectual activity, his figure hardly fills the prominent place in history which his abilities might have won for him. At one period of his career he was undoubtedly the most powerful political personage of his day. But he lived to see the time when his influence was smaller than that of many minor politicians. His restless energy, admirably adapted for the work of an opposition leader in the House of Commons, was ill-suited for the calmer atmosphere of the House of Lords; and the coronet, which he received with the Chancellorship in Lord Grey's Administration, ultimately extinguished his political career. It would be unfair to say of Lord Brougham that he was 'Jack of all trades, and master of none,' for he was undoubtedly pre-eminent in many different occupations. But Lord Brougham's career does afford a striking proof that the most splendid abilities are not equal to attaining absolute priority in a great many fields at the same time. Lord Brougham might have attained the eminence of Fox as a politician, of Erskine as an advocate, of Playfair as a mathematician,

CHAP. III.

of Herschel as an astronomer, of Hallam as an historian. He tried to rival all these characters in their various stations: and, in consequence, though he ran a good second to them all, he did not win quite the first place in any race.

Brougham has left behind him his own autobiography; but his autobiography is rather a record of the writer's weaknesses than of his greatness. It abounds in proofs of the egotistic vanity which marred Brougham's career: it suggests the presumption that the writer was either too careless to be accurate, or that he wilfully in his old age altered the correspondence which he had written in his youth. Some of the arguments which Colenso has used against the authenticity of the Pentateuch might be employed with crushing effect against Lord Brougham. He gravely produces a letter, which he alleges to be from George III. to the Prince of Wales, but which was really written by George II. to George III.'s father; and founds an argument upon it. He produces a letter from Lord Grey, purporting to be written in 1815, and mentioning Ponsonby's funeral, though Ponsonby did not die for two years afterwards! He mentions the Duchess of Kent in 1815, though the duke did not marry till 1818! He makes one of his correspondents speak of Palmerston as Secretary of War and in the Cabinet in August, 1809, though Palmerston was not Secretary of War for more than a month afterwards, and was not in the Cabinet for another 20 years. These mistakes, it must be remembered, do not occur in a posthumous memoir, but in letters professedly written at the time, incorporated into the memoir. How could Lord Grey in 1815 have spoken of the funeral of a gentleman who was alive and well? How could Brougham in 1815 have spoken of a Duchess of Kent when there was no Duchess of Kent till 1818? The inference is irresistible. The veteran, in compiling his memoirs, must have wilfully altered or rewritten the

correspondence of his youth. In either case his authority is less trustworthy than that of any other contemporary writer. CHAP. III.

It is hardly necessary in this history to mention either Whitbread or Horner; for the former unfortunately destroyed himself in the summer of 1815; the latter was compelled by enfeebled health to withdraw to a milder climate in the autumn of 1816. He died at Pisa early in 1817. Few men had ever displayed so much promise as Horner. Few men, with such small advantages to start with, had ever acquired in an equal time so considerable a reputation. Horner was one of those remarkable men whose opinions are in advance of their age. He was not spared to see the views which he spent his life in advocating obtain general acceptance. But he lived long enough to win the respect of his contemporaries, and to elicit from the House, of which he was a member, a remarkable tribute to his merits. 'A Howard introduced,' wrote Mackintosh, 'and an English House of Commons adopted the proposition of thus honouring the memory of a man of thirty-eight, the son of a shop-keeper, who never filled any office, or had the power of obliging a living creature, and whose grand title to this distinction was the belief of his virtue.'[1] Whitbread was not a profound thinker like Horner, but he was a much more useful politician. His character was peculiarly English, and, with all the prejudice which his trade pursuits created against him, he rose to the very highest position in the Whig party. The Whigs, when they formed the Talents administration, had, indeed, the folly to exclude him from office. This exclusion led to some temporary coolness between Whitbread and the Whig leaders. But the slight difference, which was thus occasioned, was soon terminated. A permanent quarrel with Whitbread was, in fact, almost impossible. Occasionally warm in debate, Horne Whitbread.

[1] Mackintosh, vol. ii. p. 344.

CHAP. III.

his warmth was never carried beyond the doors of the House. He 'was a rough speaker,' said Wilberforce, 'he spoke as if he had a pot of porter at his lips, and all his words came through it.'[1] Wilberforce's illustration was singularly happy. It was the happier because Whitbread was never ashamed of the occupation to which he owed his wealth. An insolent Tory had once the indecency to allude to him as a brewer of bad porter. The House was uproarious. Whitbread alone kept his temper. 'I rise, Mr. Speaker, as a tradesman,' he quietly began, 'to complain of the gallant officer for abusing the commodity which I sell.'[2] Perhaps an impudent attack had never been more happily or more effectually turned.

Romilly.

Sir Samuel Romilly filled a larger figure in the House than either Whitbread or Horner, and his life, like Whitbread's, was abruptly terminated at a very early period of this history by his own hand. Mackintosh, in 1810, while living at Bombay, wrote of Romilly: 'His moral character, I think, stands higher than that of any other conspicuous Englishman now alive.'[3] After an interval of more than half a century it is difficult to gainsay the truth of Mackintosh's observation. It would be easy to name statesmen who had higher abilities, and who did greater service than Romilly to the State. It would be hard to name one who so consistently and so disinterestedly endeavoured to benefit humanity.

Romilly was descended from a Huguenot family. His grandfather, flying from the religious tyranny of Louis XIV., settled in London as a wax bleacher. His business was unsuccessful; bankruptcy and poverty overtook him; his gentle spirit sank under an accumulation of misfortune, and he died at an early age leaving four sons and four daughters unprovided for. Peter Romilly, the youngest of these sons, was bound apprentice to a

[1] Wilberforce, vol. v. p. 339. [2] Colchester, vol. ii. p. 243.
[3] Mackintosh, vol. ii. p. 34.

jeweller; he worked as a journeyman; he married; and had six children. But the six children all died; and Peter Romilly, imagining that a town residence was unwholesome, hired some lodgings in the then purer air of Marylebone. The experiment was successful. In course of time three other children were born to him, all of whom attained maturity. Samuel Romilly, the youngest of the three, was educated with his brother by a brutal master at a day school in Marylebone.

The time soon arrived when it was necessary for young Romilly to commence life in earnest. He was distantly related to Sir Samuel Fludyer, who, like Whittington, had raised himself by his labour to opulence and the Mayoralty. Sir Samuel was young Romilly's godfather, and offered him a situation in his counting-house. Nothing but Sir Samuel's death interfered with this arrangement; had Sir Samuel lived, it is possible that his godson might have passed an obscure life in a city office. On Sir Samuel's death, Romilly's father decided on educating both his sons for his own business. Young Romilly, however, hated the work. At an opportune moment a distant relative left him and his family a few thousand pounds; and, with this moderate increase of fortune, Romilly left his father's shop, and was articled to one of the sworn clerks in Chancery. But Romilly did not long persevere in his new calling. A sworn clerk's seat would have cost him 2,000*l.*, and have absorbed his little fortune. Again changing his career, he entered the Society of Gray's Inn, and commenced studying the law. His studies were interrupted by bad health. But, when he was twenty-six years old, he was called to the Bar, and obtained a little employment in drawing pleadings.

Few people would have imagined at this period that Romilly had any chance of making a figure in the world. He had changed his profession three times; his health was bad; his studies desultory; the time, which he might

CHAP. III.

have given to the Bar, was frequently devoted to writing political pamphlets. One of these pamphlets, however, induced Lord Lansdowne to take a warm interest in the writer. Lord Lansdowne encouraged him to persevere in his legal studies. The advice was taken; and Romilly's perseverance was rewarded. His business gradually improved. When the Talents administration came into office, Romilly, though he had no seat in Parliament, was made Solicitor-General. He was almost immediately afterwards elected for the now disfranchised borough of Queenborough. Romilly remained in office for a little more than a year. He remained in Parliament, as member for Queenborough, Horsham, Wareham, Arundel, and Westminster, for rather more than twelve years. He was not distinguished as a very great advocate; he was, by no means, very successful as a Parliamentary speaker. His political life was full of disappointments; he was constantly in a minority; and he was rarely able to carry any of the measures which he was continually promoting. Notwithstanding these constant failures, however, Romilly's name stands higher, and deserves to stand higher, than that of almost any of his contemporaries. Had he devoted his career to any particular object he might possibly have been rewarded with greater success. But Romilly's kind heart was equally moved by the oppression of the criminal, the pauper, the little child, or the dumb animal. His life was spent in waging one long battle against excessive punishments, oppressive laws, savage sports, and cruelty to animals. He died before the principles, which he had spent his life in enforcing, had obtained general acceptance.

Such were the leading statesmen in the two houses of the Legislature at the close of the great war. Every member of the House of Commons ranked of course below the Speaker; and the Speaker of the time, though of less consequence than most of those who have hitherto

been mentioned, had an exaggerated opinion of his own importance. Charles Abbot, the first Lord Colchester, was the younger son of a country clergyman. His father's family was respectable, and the son received a gentleman's education at Westminster and Christchurch. He left Oxford in 1778, and, after a short tour on the continent, took chambers in Lincoln's Inn, with a view to studying for the law. Five years afterwards, or in 1783, he was called to the Bar. But, after eleven years' practice, he abandoned his profession, and accepted an easy and dignified office—the Clerkship of the Rules in the Court of King's Bench. The position, which Abbot was thus fortunate enough to secure, was worth 2,700*l.* a year. The leisure, which its acceptance obtained for him, induced him to meditate on the possibility of entering Parliament. The Duke of Leeds had known him, years before, as a Westminster boy, and the Duke's friendship procured for him a convenient and comfortable seat at Helston. Abbot soon found abundant occupation in the House of Commons, but his occupations were very different from those of most of his contemporaries. When he spoke he spoke with credit; but he was only tempted on rare occasions to take part in debate. No member of the House, however, devoted himself with greater zeal to the business of Committees. He discovered that a great many temporary laws expired without observation; he obtained a Committee which made a Register of temporary laws and removed the danger. He presided over the Finance Committee of 1797; he moved for an inquiry into the National Records; he introduced the first census Bill. By these various means he acquired the reputation of an able and industrious member; and became obviously designed for important office.

The resignation of Pitt in 1801 afforded an opening for the plodding member. Addington the Speaker became Prime Minister. Mitford, afterwards Lord Redesdale,

CHAP. III.

became Speaker; and Abbot, after a good deal of negotiation, was prevailed on to accept the Chief Secretaryship of Ireland. But his career in Ireland was a very short one. Before a year was over Mitford became Lord Redesdale and Irish Chancellor, and Abbot was selected to succeed Mitford in the chair of the House of Commons. He occupied that chair for the unusually long period of fifteen years; and, though, on one memorable occasion, his conduct in the chair was vehemently attacked, he is almost universally admitted to have made a firm, impartial, and dignified Speaker. Instinctively conservative in all his proceedings, he stickled sometimes to an almost ludicrous extent for his own rights, and the rights of the House. In the notorious proceedings which followed the arrest of Sir Francis Burdett in 1810, for instance, he openly advocated extreme measures, which would have changed the House of Commons from a representative chamber into an engine of arbitrary government.

Abbot, however, will not be mainly remembered for the many virtues and trifling defects which he displayed in the chair of the House of Commons. Posterity will chiefly associate him with the remarkable diary which he kept through the whole of his parliamentary career. Night after night, when the business of the day was over, Abbot was in the habit of jotting down in one or two short sentences the information which he had acquired in the previous twenty-four hours. The diary admirably illustrates the impartiality of the Speaker's character. It contains a mass of information, which no one desirous of ascertaining the history of those times can neglect. But it is the very dullest of all the dull biographies in the language. In the whole 2,000 pages, there is hardly a sentence which stirs the reader's pulse, or an anecdote which provokes a smile.

Public men enjoying a seat in either House of Parliament attract a larger share of attention than their con-

temporaries, who may possibly possess equal influence and may be equally conversant with affairs of state. Yet the history of England would be very imperfectly understood if attention were only paid to the characters of the leading political statesmen. There has probably never been a time in English history when men outside Parliament and without office have not exercised considerable influence in the management of affairs, and this conclusion is especially true of the particular period under review. The history of England during the closing years of the life of George III. is the record of a series of State prosecutions; and in the trials which took place, the two most prominent figures were the first Lord Ellenborough, the Chief Justice of England, and Sir Vicary Gibbs, the Chief Justice of the Court of Common Pleas. Both these distinguished men were born in 1750. Both of them concluded their judicial careers in 1818. Both of them viewed the politics of their time from the same standpoint. It was said of Sir Vicary Gibbs that he had as Attorney-General filed more ex officio informations for libel than any of his predecessors; that these informations had averaged fourteen a year; that some of them were never brought to trial, but were kept suspended over the heads of the unfortunate defendants.[1] 'He filed his informations by the score; he had every newspaper not devoted to the Treasury under prosecution at once; and though he did not bring many of his cases to trial, he harassed his victims by anxiety and delay; he exhausted them by costs.'[2] If Sir Vicary Gibbs were industrious in filing ex officio informations, he found in Lord Ellenborough a judge prepared to stamp out libellers. It was the constant habit of Lord Ellenborough to direct the jury that a particular publication was libellous, instead of asking them to decide whether it were a libel or not. He has been defended for his conduct in this respect by one great

Lord Ellenborough.

[1] Romilly, vol. ii. p. 380. [2] *Edin. Review*, vol. xxxvii. p. 3.

CHAP. III.

authority, the late Lord Brougham. There can be no doubt that his practice, whether it were defensible or no, exposed him to some great humiliation from stubborn juries.

Edward, Lord Ellenborough, was the son of the Bishop of Carlisle. He soon rose to great eminence at the Bar. He had the honour of acting as leading counsel to Warren Hastings; he was made Attorney General by Addington in 1801; he succeeded Lord Kenyon as Chief Justice of England, in 1802; and he continued to fill that high office till his voluntary retirement from it in 1818. During a portion of this period he sat in the Cabinet, and he deserves to be recollected as the last Englishman who has united the two incompatible positions of a judge and a minister. A few precedents were quoted at the time to justify Lord Ellenborough's anomalous position, but Lord Ellenborough himself lived to acknowledge the anomaly. In one sense, however, Lord Ellenborough probably fulfilled his position as a Cabinet Minister quite as ably as he discharged his functions as a judge. Whether in or out of office he took a warm interest in political affairs, and his voice was continually heard in the Upper House of Parliament. In another sense, his colleagues in the Administration must have occasionally tried his patience. Lord Ellenborough was the very last man who ought to have occupied a seat in a government which had Fox for a Foreign Secretary, and Romilly for an Attorney General. His political career was chiefly memorable for his defence of sinecures, and his defence of capital punishment. Lord Ellenborough clung to the sinecures which were attached to his own office with a tenacity which was worthy of a better cause. 'Reduction of salary,' he gravely argued, 'must proceed on the ground of diminution in duty. Now as nothing has ever been done in the chief clerkship of the Court of King's Bench, it is impossible that less could be done in it in future.' It would have been difficult to have afforded a plainer proof that

his fortunate son, whom he had made chief clerk, was entitled to draw 7,000*l.* a year, the profits of the sinecure, for doing nothing.

Lord Ellenborough's views on sinecures cost the country a large sum of money. Lord Ellenborough's views on capital punishment were far more serious in their consequences. It was on his high authority that the Peers insisted on retaining death as the punishment for stealing five shillings from a shop; it was on his high authority that they were induced to believe that the offence of picking pockets had been encouraged by the abolition of this punishment; it was by his exertions that a harsh criminal code was retained in its integrity during his whole lifetime. Yet Lord Ellenborough was not a bad man; in private life he was not severe; he was not even a very harsh judge. He honestly believed in the horrible opinions which he studiously promoted; and he seriously thought it desirable to stamp out crime just as a later generation have stamped out the cattle plague. His opinions were the product of the period in which he had been trained; reformers, such as Adam Smith or Jeremy Bentham, were in his judgment visionary speculators, whose writings it was difficult to read, and whose advice it was inexpedient to follow. The political machinery of the State could only be kept in order by the lubrication supplied by sinecure offices; it could only be preserved in safety by the constant presence of the gallows.

Sir Vicary Gibbs.

The harsh views which distinguished Lord Ellenborough both as a judge and a statesman were also entertained by his fellow Chief Justice, Sir Vicary Gibbs. Sir Vicary's character was not an agreeable one. He had an irritable temper, and an excellent opinion of himself. His irritability and conceit made him unpopular at the Bar; yet the counsel who disliked him the most were the first to admit the shrewdness of his intellect. Sir Vicary, how-

CHAP. III.

ever, is less remembered for his conduct as a judge than as a law officer of the Crown. He became Solicitor-General in 1805. He became Attorney-General in 1812. 'There were in his time,' said his biographer, 'no less than fifty-two newspapers published in London, one half of which are said to have been at one and the same period under prosecution. He hung them all on the horns of a dilemma. If the editor apologised for a libel, his apology came too late; for the Attorney-General would not allow him "first to calumniate a man, and then to nauseate him with flattery." If, on the other hand, the unhappy author made no apology, he obviously deserved punishment as a hardened offender.'[1]

It would be impossible at the present time to imagine a Chief Justice employing the ordinary language of Lord Ellenborough; it would be impossible for any Attorney-General to use the arguments of Sir Vicary Gibbs. But it would be equally impossible to revive Vansittart's finance, Castlereagh's foreign policy, or Sidmouth's administration of the Home Office. The tone of thought which made it practicable for Lord Sidmouth to suspend the Habeas Corpus Act, for Lord Castlereagh to force the Alien Act through Parliament, or for Vansittart to place prohibitory duties on foreign wool, was accurately represented by the judicial careers of Lord Ellenborough and Sir Vicary Gibbs. But the ministers and judges of 1816 were not harsher than their other contemporaries; their single fault lay in their too close agreement with the opinions of those among whom they lived. That agreement was the origin of their power in their own lifetime. It enabled them to obtain an easy triumph over their political opponents. But posterity has reversed the judgment of contemporary critics. Ten years after Lord Liverpool died, the policy which was pursued by his administration had not a single advocate, and those mem-

[1] Townshend's *Eminent Judges*, quoted in Creasy's *Eminent Etonians*.

bers of his Ministry were regarded with the most favour who were supposed to be the least identified with Lord Liverpool's opinions. So has it constantly been from the days of Alfred to the days of Victoria. Contemporary critics have enthusiastically applauded the statesmen who spent their time in a vigorous defence of existing abuses. Posterity has almost unanimously awarded the chief fame to their opponents who passed their days in assailing them. The fame of Lord Liverpool in 1816 overshadowed the slender authority of Lord Grey. The position of Lord Ellenborough was far more enviable than that of Sir Samuel Romilly. Yet the barren honours of Lord Grey and Romilly seem now far preferable to the stars and sinecures with which Lord Liverpool and Lord Ellenborough were rewarded. The latter are associated with traditions which have been abandoned in disgust; the former are identified with reforms, which have given peace and happiness to a contented people.

CHAPTER IV.

CHAP. IV.

English Literature.

THE reign of George III. will always be remarkable for the development of British industry and British trade. The ability and ingenuity of a few great men placed new resources at the disposal of the nation, and by substituting the steam engine for the hand of man; the road for the track; and the canal for the road; increased a hundredfold the resources of the country, and its capacity for industrial enterprise. It is questionable whether great wealth and great prosperity are favourable to the cultivation of literature, science, and art. The noblest literature of Rome was, indeed, produced amidst the prosperity and wealth which made the reign of Augustus Cæsar memorable. The Tuscan school flourished under the patronage of the wealthiest and the wisest of the Medicis. But Raphael in modern history, and Virgil in the ancient world, owed more to the tone of society and to the tone of thought of the ages in which they lived than to the patronage of Augustus or the Medicis. Horace did more to perpetuate the name of Mæcenas than Mæcenas did to cultivate the genius of the poet. This country has become much wealthier since the days of Elizabeth and the days of Anne. But it has failed to produce a second Shakespeare or a second Dryden.

The almost unanimous verdict of competent critics has pronounced the most brilliant era of English literature to have commenced with the age of Elizabeth and to have closed with that of Anne. The century and a half which is embraced in this period produced the three greatest masters of the English language—Shakespeare, Milton,

and Dryden. But other writers, some of whom were hardly inferior to these, dignified this golden period of English literature. Spenser, Sidney, Marlowe, Ben Jonson, Raleigh, Cowley, Selden, Clarendon, Bunyan, Butler, Defoe, Swift, Addison, Pope, and Bolingbroke, in various ways illustrated and enriched the noble language of their common country. A circumstance, with which they had no direct connection themselves, stereotyped the expressions which they used. The Bible was translated into English at the very time at which Shakespeare was writing. The Reformation placed the work in the hands of every Englishman who could read. The language of the Bible became the language of the nation; the expressions which its translators used became for ever part and parcel of English speech. An ordinary person can hardly read the pre-Reformation writers without a glossary. No one requires a key to enable him to appreciate the beauties of the Elizabethan dramatist or to understand Raleigh's 'History of the World.'

Success in any line of life usually leads to imitation. Where one man achieves fame, a hundred others think that they may become equally famous. Birmingham ware has in every age been foisted on a credulous public; and Brummagem has appeared in spurious literature and art nearly as frequently as in spurious silver and gold. The scholars of Raphael imitated with matchless fidelity the finish of their master; and an uncritical age, enchanted with the beauty of their pigments, forebore to notice their want of originality and power. Exactly the same thing occurred in literature in the eighteenth century. Few writers, indeed, had the hardihood to imitate the imagery of Shakespeare, the diction of Milton, or the vigour of Dryden. But a dozen writers succeeded in copying the rhythmical excellence of Pope. Though, however, they caught the trick of Pope's style, they failed to imitate the vigour of his language. Churchill, the

CHAP. IV.

most successful of them all, attacked with power and venom some of the vices of his time. No satire was ever more severe than his description of Fitzpatrick, the nameless thing, in the 'Rosciad.' But the 'Rosciad' ranks as a poem below the 'Dunciad.' Three times in the century, indeed, different writers, each of considerable power, cast a temporary ray upon the darkness which obscured the literature of England. For the style and finish of their pieces, Gray, Goldsmith, and Cowper have never been surpassed. 'The Elegy,' 'The Deserted Village,' and the 'Lines on my Mother's Picture,' are admirable examples of perfection in composition. But, though these pieces are evidently the productions of intellects naturally of a high order, and polished with the most careful culture, they have failed to place their authors in the very first flight of English poets. The polish is almost too bright, and its brightness seems designed to atone for the absence of higher qualities. If, however, such authors as Gray, Cowper, or Goldsmith failed to attain the highest rank in English literature, what shall be said of the lesser poets, who were read and admired during the same period?

> Augustus still survives in Maro's strain,
> And Spenser's verse prolongs Eliza's reign.
> Great George's acts let tuneful Cibber sing,
> For nature formed the poet for the king.

Intellectual activity in the latter half of the seventeenth century.

During the first seventy years, then, of the eighteenth century, the literature of Britain gradually declined from the high position which it had occupied in the reign of Anne; but, during the latter portion of this period, at any rate, the gradual decadence of imaginative literature was accompanied with a remarkable development of reasoning, investigation and research. The foremost thinkers of the time were no longer satisfied with accepting the theories which their predecessors had venerated as axioms, and

the boldest inquiries were freely pushed into every branch of human knowledge. This intellectual activity was equally visible in England and Scotland.* In physical science, Scotland produced Black and Hutton; England, Priestley and Cavendish; Scotland the land of his birth, England the country of his adoption, have an equal claim to the merit of John Hunter's profound investigations into the structure of men and animals. The glory attaching to the great inventions of the period belongs equally to the two countries. England produced the machines which revolutionised every branch of the textile industry; a Scotchman discovered the motive power, without which these inventions would have been deprived of half their value.

The profound investigations which were made by Black, Priestley and Cavendish in physical science; the knowledge of the anatomy of the lower forms of animals which John Hunter succeeded in acquiring, and the foundations which Hutton laid of the modern science of geology, had ultimately a prodigious effect on the thinking portion of British men and women. This effect will, however, be more conveniently considered in connection with the great religious movement which commenced towards the close of the first half of the nineteenth century, and which was in reality the reaction of the more superstitious portion of the community against the free thought which scientific investigation had produced. For the present, therefore, it is unnecessary to refer any further to the purely scientific investigations of the eighteenth century. But the same intellectual activity, which animated Priestley and Black, characterised also another class of thinkers, who exercised an enormous influence on the minds of succeeding generations. The decade in which Black was born gave birth to Adam Smith; and Adam Smith may be said to have changed the whole theory of government, and in this way to have contributed

Adam Smith.

CHAP. IV.

more than any other person to the great revolutions of the nineteenth century.

At the time of Adam Smith's birth, the foremost statesmen and thinkers were of opinion that a legislature by wise laws could exercise a beneficial influence on its country's fortunes. The political arithmeticians of the previous century had adopted the erroneous notion that the precious metals, the most useless of all commodities, were the sole sources of wealth. In their view, consequently, a country could not be prosperous unless its exports showed a balance over its imports, which the foreigners had to pay for in gold. The acceptance of this theory logically led to the artificial encouragement of the export trade, and to the artificial discouragement of the import trade. The first object was attained by the grant of bounties on the export of articles of British produce, the second by the imposition of import duties on articles of foreign produce. Both courses proved equally fatal to the home consumer, since the price of every commodity in common use was enormously raised by the system; in the long run they were equally fatal to the capitalist, since they induced him to invest his capital in undertakings which did not thrive naturally on the soil of Britain, but which had to be fostered, like tropical plants, by artificial methods.

Indirectly, the conclusions of the political arithmeticians were even more disastrous. If every article of foreign produce had to be paid for by a sacrifice of British wealth, it naturally followed that the welfare of the nation depended on its being self-supporting. It seemed absolutely necessary, therefore, that the country should grow at least as much corn as it consumed. It seemed obvious that more land would be cultivated, and more corn would be grown, if the price of grain were high than if it were low; and a series of laws were in consequence passed to discourage the importation of foreign corn, and

to raise the price of British corn. The same chain of reasoning induced politicians to conclude that the welfare of the country depended on labour being cheap. If wages rose, the British manufacturer would compete on less favourable terms with the foreigner. Cheap labour and dear corn were, therefore, the miserable objects which every patriot was bound to desire.

A creed of this sort was naturally acceptable to the ruling classes, to whom it was addressed. They were not likely to question conclusions which increased their rent-rolls and raised their own importance. They willingly accepted the welcome doctrine, and pushed the theories of the political arithmeticians to their logical extreme. For the sake of securing a favourable balance on the foreign trade of the country, they undertook to interfere in the commonest affairs of life. They endeavoured to regulate the clothes which the living should wear, and the shrouds in which the dead should be buried. The Irish were to devote themselves to linen goods, the English were to have a monopoly of the woollen trade, pure cotton goods were not to be worn, and French silks were to be confiscated at the instance of any informer. When legislators thus attempted to regulate the ordinary details of domestic life, they naturally carried their principles into larger concerns. The carrying trade was to be confined to British ships; British ships were to be manned by British crews. Capitalists were only to charge specified rates of interest for the use of their capital. Everyone entering a trade was to undergo an apprenticeship. The direct interference of the Legislature was, in short, visible in every affair of life, and the time of Parliament was occupied with minutely regulating the conditions on which every trade and every industry should be conducted.

The minute regulations which were in consequence made in every branch of industry would undoubtedly

CHAP. IV.

have materially interfered with the development of British trade, which subsequently occurred. At the very time, however, at which the great inventions of Watt and Arkwright were being perfected, Adam Smith was engaged on the profound investigations which he made into the true causes of the wealth of nations. Smith was born at Kirkcaldy in 1723; the 'Wealth of Nations' was published in 1776; its author himself imagined that his fame would ultimately rest on a previous work—the 'Theory of Moral Sentiments.' His idea in this respect only proves how imperfectly he appreciated the importance of his own labours. For one person, who has read the 'Theory of Moral Sentiments,' a thousand have probably read the 'Wealth of Nations.' The former work exercises, at the present time, no perceptible influence. The influence of the latter work has been continually increasing for one hundred years.

It was the object of the 'Wealth of Nations' to prove that the economical conclusions which had been universally accepted in the world were erroneous. Wealth, the author showed, was produced by labour, or—which is really the same thing—by capital, which is the accumulation of previous labour. The labourer and the capitalist were better judges than the State of the industries in which their capital and labour might most usefully be employed; and all interference with their freedom was therefore unnecessary and objectionable. The favourable balance of trade, which political arithmeticians had been intent on securing, was an object with which legislators had nothing to do. Importance had only been attached to it because the political arithmeticians had fixed their attention on the foreign trade of the nation, and had overlooked the internal or domestic trade, which was of more importance and a surer source of wealth. The chief rule of legislation should be to leave men to themselves. Every man was the best judge of his own interests, and what was

true of each man taken singly was true also of any body of men in the nation.

The conclusions which Adam Smith thus expressed in the 'Wealth of Nations' entirely subverted the ideas which had previously been fashionable. Protection had been the natural result of the doctrine, which had been taught by Adam Smith's predecessors. Free trade was the logical consequence of the new teaching. The change was so great that the minds, which had ripened into maturity under the influence of the old ideas, were unable to grasp the full force of the new gospel. Even Fox, who in every respect was one of the most liberal of his generation, declared that the 'Wealth of Nations' was 'plausible and inconclusive;' while Tory statesmen, like Lord Ellenborough, thought the book so dull that they were absolutely unable to read it.[1] But younger minds, whose convictions on economical subjects were not already stereotyped, were unable to resist the reasoning and the authority of the great Scotch thinker. The impression which the 'Wealth of Nations' made upon them may be understood even now by any young politician, who, nursed amidst Conservative traditions, and trained amidst the Conservative surroundings of a great English public school, ventures, on the threshold of his career, before his convictions are confirmed, to open the 'Wealth of Nations.' The great truths, which will then dawn upon him for the first time, may possibly lead to no immediate change in his habits or in his professed opinions; but they will slowly and surely induce a train of thought, which will gradually undermine the faith of his boyhood; and replace it with a broader and a more generous creed. The light, which may thus break on any youthful Tory now, dawned a century ago on the rising generation. Great thinkers, like Pitt, immediately perceived the importance of the truths which were thus revealed to them;

[1] Romilly, vol. iii. p. 52; Colchester, vol. ii. p. 71.

CHAP. IV.

other men, with less ability than Pitt, more gradually adopted the conclusions which the leading intellects of their own age accepted as axioms; and a generation, in consequence, arose prepared to dispute the doctrines on which their fathers and forefathers had acted, and to embrace the novel principles of free trade.

The 'Wealth of Nations' was published in 1776. At the time of its publication Adam Smith was fifty-six years old. In the same year a much younger man, destined to exercise a considerable influence, had published anonymously in London, a 'Fragment on Government.' Jeremy Bentham, the author of this essay, was born in 1748. Endowed with precocious talents, his education was completed at a period of life when the serious work of most men is only beginning. He took his B.A. degree in 1763, when he was only fifteen, and at once commenced to study for the Bar. His own ability, and the interest of his father—who was a solicitor—pointed to his success in his profession. But Bentham had no inclination towards its active duties. While he was passing through Oxford, Blackstone had been delivering the famous lectures which were afterwards published in the 'Commentaries on the Laws of England.' Mere boy that he was, Bentham satisfied himself that he detected some fallacies in Blackstone's reasoning. The experience which he gained, and the information which he acquired, while he was studying for the Bar, confirmed these views, and induced him in 1776 to publish his 'Fragment on Government.'

Jeremy Bentham.

The 'Fragment on Government' was suggested by a well-known passage in the 'Commentaries,' in which Blackstone had considered the various forms of government which the world had known; had dwelt on the peculiar excellencies of the English Constitution; and had declared that it was the right and the duty of the supreme power to make laws. Bentham, in his admirably reasoned

reply, showed that Blackstone's loose language had, in reality, no meaning whatever. Governments rest on no other foundation than their utility; their so-called right to make laws depends on the utility of the laws they make; the obedience of the subject is again a question of utility; and 'it is allowable and incumbent on every man, as well on the score of duty as of interest, to enter into measures of resistance when, according to the best calculation he is able to make, the probable mischiefs of resistance (speaking with respect to the community in general) appear less to him than the probable mischiefs of submission.'[1]

A work, containing views of this description, and boldly grappling with the greatest legal writer of the day, naturally attracted considerable attention. It was 'variously attributed to Lord Mansfield, Lord Camden, and Lord Ashburton.'[2] But exception was roundly taken to the novel doctrines of utility. It is a dangerous doctrine, said Wedderburn, among others. Yes, replied Bentham, it is dangerous; but it is dangerous only to those who profit from a system of government which is not founded on the great principle of utility. 'In a government, which had for its end the greatest happiness of the greatest number, Alexander Wedderburn might have been Attorney-General and then Chancellor. But he would not have been Attorney-General with 15,000*l.* a year, nor Chancellor with a Peerage, and with 500 sinecures at his disposal under the name of Ecclesiastical Benefices, besides et ceteras.'[3] Though, however, Bentham gave this crushing reply to Wedderburn, Wedderburn's attack induced him to alter his definition. In his 'Principles of Morals and Legislation,' in which this reply to Wedderburn appeared as a note, instead of referring everything to utility, he based his system on

[1] Bentham's *Works*. Edinb. 1843, vol. i. p. 287.
[2] *Encyclopædia Britannica*. [3] Bentham's *Works*, vol. i. p. 3.

CHAP. IV.

the greatest happiness of the greatest number. The same principle had been advocated by Beccaria in Italy, and by Hutcheson and Priestley in this country; but it had never been made, as it was Bentham's object to make it, the keystone of a system of jurisprudence.[1] To Bentham's exact mind there was probably no difference between the definition which he thus adopted and the one which he discarded. 'That is useful,' so he wrote, 'which taking all things and all persons into consideration leaves a balance of happiness.' But, though in Bentham's logical mind, the change of a phrase made no difference in his argument, the alteration made his meaning much more intelligible to his readers, and 'the greatest happiness' principle secured a popularity which the utility principle would probably have never enjoyed.

Bentham's labours were directed to secure the reconstruction of the whole system of jurisprudence. He applied the principle of utility to every subject in succession, endeavouring in each of them, not merely to point out the faults which he detected, but to explain the manner in which they should be remedied in accordance with his principle. Bentham, therefore, at the close of the eighteenth century, was doing for jurisprudence what Adam Smith had already done for commerce. Bentham's works, however, never enjoyed the popularity of Adam Smith's, because the majority of them were not written in the clear style of the great Scotch philosopher. Bentham's earlier essays, indeed, are models of exactness of language and purity of style; but, in his later works, in his efforts to be exact he is occasionally obscure. He uses words, which he is at pains to define, but which ordinary readers hardly understand. He would himself have replied that he did not write for ordinary readers, and that he did not care to be read by those who would

[1] For Hutcheson's claims to the greatest happiness principle, see Mr. Leslie Stephen's *History of English Thought*, vol. ii. p. 61, note.

not take the trouble to appreciate his meaning. The teacher, however, who will not descend to the level of his disciples will always incur the danger of thinning his school. If it be worth while to write at all, it is certainly worth while to render the meaning of words as plain and clear as it is possible to make it.

The obscurity of some of Bentham's later works probably accounts for the circumstance that, while the majority of mankind have long ago accepted most of his opinions, they have not given their originator the credit of them. Every one associates free trade with Adam Smith; but few people attribute the reform of the criminal code or the alteration of the Poor Laws to Bentham. The degree of credit, however, which Bentham has obtained is immaterial. The point for observation lies in the circumstance that, twenty years before the close of the eighteenth century, two great thinkers in Scotland and England were almost simultaneously questioning the system on which the British Government was founded, and the policy which it had constantly pursued. The views, which Smith and Bentham thus propounded, were almost immediately accepted by some of the younger and more generous of their fellow-countrymen. Yet, notwithstanding their acceptance, they made no impression on the Legislature. At the period at which this history opens nearly forty years had passed since the publication of the 'Fragment on Government.' More than thirty-five years had passed since the first appearance of the 'Wealth of Nations.' Yet the old commercial system, which Adam Smith had attacked, flourished with greater vitality than ever. The old views, which Jeremy Bentham had proved erroneous, still animated the Legislature.

The reaction which prevented the acceptance of the new teaching.

The circumstance appears, at first sight, more remarkable, because the earlier years of Pitt's administration were undoubtedly distinguished by a disposition to adopt a wiser system. In negotiating a commercial

CHAP. IV.

treaty with France, Pitt showed his appreciation of Adam Smith. In supporting Parliamentary Reform he displayed an inclination to accept the 'utility' doctrine. Up to 1790 everything pointed to the gradual adoption of the novel principles which Adam Smith and Bentham had applied to legislation. The happy promise, which was thus given to the nation, was almost immediately afterwards broken. The circumstances under which it was broken are familiar to nearly every one. The gross abuses which permeated every department of government in France led to the great convulsion of society, which is known in history as the French Revolution. An infuriated people, suddenly emancipating themselves from an oppressive tyranny, and finding themselves in possession of an almost uncontrolled power, were hurried into excesses which it was impossible to defend. The horror which these excesses created produced a reaction in Britain. The generation in which they occurred took its stand on old traditions, and refused to receive any new doctrine. The great convulsion, in short, which delivered France for ever from some of the worst features of its Government, condemned Britain for another generation to submit to the abuses of the old system.

Burke was, of course, the prominent representative of this reaction. A statesman, whose whole career had been distinguished by admirable efforts to reform and enlighten every department of the Government, was so shocked at the course which Revolution had taken in France as to modify his old opinions, to sacrifice his old friends, and to support a system which in other times he had resolutely opposed. It is immaterial for the present purpose to consider whether, in 1791, Burke's great intellect had or had not been weakened by affliction and disease.[1] That is a purely personal question, with which

[1] Most people will recollect Buckle's beautiful apology for Burke on this score.—*Hist. of Civilisation*, vol. i. p. 476.

this chapter has no immediate concern. In this place Burke is merely regarded as the leading spokesman of an influential portion of the nation. The feelings which Burke expressed in Parliament were largely shared by other classes. They influenced the thoughts, the habits, and the writings of Englishmen for twenty years; and thus continued for the whole of that period the remarkable reaction which commenced with the outbreak of the French Revolution.

It is possible to trace the violence of the storm, which was thus raised, in nearly every branch of English literature. Up to the outbreak of the French Revolution, Smith and Bentham had been calmly and logically examining the various questions of policy and government with which they were occupied. After the outbreak of the Revolution, none but the very calmest minds were able to preserve their equilibrium, and political writers were hurried either, like Burke, into a violent attack on the change in France; or, like Paine and Godwin, into as violent a defence of it. Amidst the excitement of the moment the gravest thinkers, in short, became partisan writers. It was, under such circumstances, inevitable that men, like Paine and Godwin, should rush into a defence of the events which Burke so uncompromisingly attacked, and that they should propose to reconstruct society on new principles. But the doctrines of these writers only increased the horror with which the Revolution was already regarded by the more influential section of British society. Godwin, especially, by attacking the traditions which had hitherto been regarded with an undeviating reverence, appeared to be loosening the bands by which society was held together. The 'Political Justice' of the one author, the 'Rights of Man' of the other, thus intensified the reaction against the principles which they supported, and convinced the nation of the

CHAP. IV.

necessity of combating a revolution which Burke had condemned and which Pitt was attacking.

For some years, then, after the French Revolution broke out, the passions, by which men of all classes were agitated, proved unfavourable either for patient inquiry or for careful thought. The recollection of republican excesses was, however, gradually effaced amidst the stirring events by which the Revolution was succeeded; and men, forgetting the extravagances of Godwin and Paine, were able again to devote themselves to speculation and research. Towards the close of the eighteenth century Malthus published his essay on the 'Principles of Population.' All animals, he showed, had a tendency to increase at a rate of geometrical progression. Their food could not, by any possibility, be increased at a greater rate than that of arithmetical progression. A thousand persons, doubling their numbers in every quarter of a century, would multiply to 16,000 in a hundred years. Their food, during the same period, would be increased fourfold. It was impossible, therefore, for man to go on multiplying at the natural rate of increase. The multiplication was checked by preventive and positive checks. In the early stages of society, the positive checks of famine, war, and disease were in operation. In the later stages, prudential considerations, which Malthus regarded as preventive checks, produced the same effects. It followed from this reasoning that the most populous countries were not necessarily the happiest; and that the men who refrained from marrying might possibly be as good citizens as those who married and had large families. These views were received with a burst of indignation at the time at which they were first published. Starving curates, with large families of starving children, had no patience with a writer who ascribed their misfortunes to their own improvidence. Employers of labour, whose interests depended on the continuance of low wages,

Malthus.

resulting from an overstocked labour market, objected to a philosophy which pointed to an era of dear labour. Even subsequent generations, compelled to accept Malthus's conclusions, have hardly forgiven the writer, who has convinced them against their will; and ignorant people still speak of Malthusian philosophy as if there was something shocking about it.

Ricardo.

Ricardo's great work was published nearly twenty years after the 'Principles of Population.' Ricardo was of Jewish extraction, and engaged during some years of his life in commercial pursuits. He embraced, however, the doctrines of Christianity and sealed his allegiance to his new faith by marrying a Christian. Amassing a large fortune in business, he decided on exchanging commerce for politics, and entered the House of Commons as member for the Irish borough of Portarlington. The circumstances, under which he obtained his seat, were so characteristic of the times in which he lived, that they deserve to be recorded. Lord Portarlington, the patron of the borough, was desirous of borrowing 40,000*l.* or 50,000*l.* But his credit was not good enough to enable him to obtain the money at the rate of interest which the law allowed at that time. Ricardo accommodated him with the loan, and was nominated for Portarlington in return for it.[1] This singular arrangement afforded Ricardo a quiet seat, and gave his country the great advantage of his services in the Legislature. The position, which he gained in the House of Commons, will be seen in later chapters of this work. The present chapter is only concerned with his contributions to political economy. Malthus had addressed himself to a problem which Adam Smith had not noticed. Ricardo had the merit of correcting one of the few defects in the 'Wealth of Nations.' Adam Smith had concluded that the price of corn was

[1] The story was told by O'Connell on March 8, 1831. *Hansard*, 3rd series, vol. iii. p. 201.

CHAP. IV.

dependent on three things—the wages of labour, the profits of the farmer, and the rent of land. The doctrine had been doubted at the time by Hume, the historian, and Anderson, the well-known author of the 'History of Commerce.' But these doubts were forgotten, and Adam Smith's conclusions were generally accepted, till their erroneous nature was finally demonstrated by Ricardo. Rent is, in reality, the surplus profit which any given land, either from the convenience of its situation or from the fertility of its soil, yields over the worst land in cultivation. The worst land in cultivation pays no rent. This conclusion is now accepted by all reasonable men. In 1816 it had not been realised by even the foremost thinkers of the age.

At the close of the great war, then, four thinkers of unusual power had demonstrated the falsity of the old doctrines which politicians of all classes had previously accepted. Adam Smith, the greatest of the four, had exposed the follies of the old system of protection. Jeremy Bentham had, almost at the same time, attacked the whole system of jurisprudence. Twenty years afterwards Malthus had, for the first time, explained the principles which govern the multiplication of mankind; while, at a still later date, Ricardo had expounded the true theories of Rent. The conclusions of all these great writers had been unfavourable to the system, which the governing classes had hitherto pursued, and to the influence of the landed interest. Adam Smith had exposed the folly of protecting any one class at the expense of others. Bentham, carrying the principle into jurisprudence, had based his polity on the greatest happiness of the greatest number. Malthus's reasoning had pointed to a preference for dear wages; and Ricardo had represented the landlords as monopolists, appropriating the surplus profits of the soil. These great truths, authoritatively propounded for the first time, were generally accepted by the younger

portion of the nation. Their influence may be clearly traced in the legislation of the succeeding thirty years; and the history of Britain, during this period, cannot be thoroughly understood by anyone who omits to notice the impression which these four men had made on the minds which were ripening into manhood at the conclusion of the war.

Historical literature

The conditions, which characterised the philosophical writings of the age under review, were also visible in other branches of contemporary literature. Up to the period in which Adam Smith was writing, the history of Britain had never been related by a British historian. Hume and Robertson supplied the deficiency: the former relating the annals of the English; the latter, in his shorter history, the fortunes of the Scottish nation. The example, which these writers had afforded, was soon followed; and Gibbon produced the work which many competent judges still regard as the greatest history in the English language. Gibbon wrote in the same generation as Hume; but there is a broad distinction between the treatment of their subjects by these two authors. Hume, the earlier of the two, desired to write a classical work. He completed his task in a period which made elaborate research impossible; and his history, unrivalled as a work of art, does not display any particular desire, on its author's part, to investigate and analyse original authorities.[1] Gibbon, on the contrary, before he attempted his history decided on 'reviewing the Latin classics under the four divisions of historians, poets, orators, and philosophers, in a chronological series from the days of Plautus and Sallust to the decline of the language and empire of Rome.'[2] The laborious task, which he thus set himself to perform, distinctly proves how

[1] See on this point some remarks by Brougham in *Men of Letters and Science*, p. 211.

[2] See Gibbon's own autobiography. The passage in the text is also quoted in *Ann. Reg.* 1796, p. 336.

CHAP. IV.

Mitford.

thoroughly he identified himself with the spirit of research which was one of the distinguishing features of the closing years of the eighteenth century. William Mitford, who, at the commencement of the nineteenth century, was the fashionable historian of Greece, in one respect resembled Gibbon. Like Gibbon, he examined for himself the entire range of Greek literature, and founded his history on original authorities. Unlike Gibbon, however, his style was unequal and occasionally bad. At his best he is pure, simple, and clear; at his worst he is involved and unintelligible. He lays himself open to the charge that he is translating Greek, instead of writing English; and his translations are so poor that a schoolboy would be punished for them.[1] But his history is open to a more serious charge. The first volume of the work was published in 1784; the second in 1790; the others at various dates between 1790 and 1810. The later volumes of the work were, therefore, composed amidst the excitement which the French Revolution occasioned. It was inevitable that Mitford should be moved by the storm around him. His brother, the first Lord Redesdale, was one of the ablest of Tory lawyers, and one of the most vigorous advocates of Tory principles. Mitford, sharing his brother's views, felt his apprehensions of the consequences of the Revolution. His feelings immediately found expression in his history. His first volume, published before the Revolution occurred, contains a passage on Draco's legislation which reads like an extract from Romilly;[2] but in his third volume, written amidst the passions which the Revolution had provoked, he expressed his conviction of 'the inherent weakness and indelible barbarism of democratical governments.'[3] A writer who could express such views as

[1] See, for instance, the account of the attack on Platæa, vol. iii. p. 79.

[2] The passage in question, explaining the follies of a severe penal code, is well worth referring to. See vol. i. p. 392.

[3] *History*, vol. iii. p. 100.

these was ill-fitted to write a philosophic history of the Greek republics. In his own lifetime, indeed, his opinions increased the popularity of his work; but they insured its supercession in a later age. Thirlwall and Grote were educated under circumstances differing from those amidst which Mitford had lived. With equal ability and equal industry they embraced other views. Grote occupies the position which Mitford once filled; and a Liberal age praises and reads the liberal writer, and neglects the industrious Tory who preceded him in his task.

Hallam.

It was Hallam's good fortune to be born at a later date than Mitford. Before he grew up to manhood the agitation, which the Revolution had occasioned, had been allayed. His mind was, therefore, free from the feelings by which Mitford was disturbed, and every topic which occupied his time was dealt with by him with the judicial calmness for which he was eminently distinguished. No great historian ever wrote with less passion, or was more anxious than Hallam to place the whole of his facts, for what they were worth, before his readers. In this respect, then, Hallam displays a marked contrast to Mitford. In elaborate research he was at least Mitford's equal. The long intervals at which his three great works were produced afford some indication of the pains which he devoted to their preparation. The 'History of the Middle Ages' was published in 1818, the 'Constitutional History of England' in 1827, the 'Literature of Europe' in 1837. It may be doubted whether three works of any other author contain the results of such extensive, varied, and careful reading. The same spirit of research which characterised the concluding years of the eighteenth century is remarkably visible in the works of Hallam. But Hallam also unconsciously owed much to the writers who immediately preceded him. It was natural that Hume, writing in the middle of the eighteenth century,

CHAP. IV.

should endeavour to found his history on a classic model, and to produce a book which should be admired as a work of art. It was equally natural that Hallam, writing at the commencement of the nineteenth century, after the publication of the commentaries, and in the lifetime of Bentham, should examine the constitutional questions which Hume had neglected, but which Blackstone's labours and Bentham's criticisms had raised into importance. The period at which he wrote was eminently favourable for the dispassionate consideration of these matters; and Hallam, therefore, may be cited, like Ricardo, to prove that, towards the close of the war, the calmest minds were escaping from the influences which had disturbed their predecessors, and were again devoting themselves to quiet investigation.

It is probably possible to show that the other historical writers of the period were influenced by the same circumstances as those which affected Hallam and Mitford. Turner, for instance, the historian of the Anglo-Saxons, is remarkable for the diligence with which he investigated the details of early English life. A defective style is perhaps the chief cause which has interfered with the continued popularity of his work. James Mill, on the contrary, the historian of India, was full of the new ideas which the Revolution had created. His history is an elaborate attack on the policy of the East India Company. In this way Mill may be said to have represented the new school of thought to which the closing years of the eighteenth century gave birth; Turner, the Conservative reaction, which was the immediate consequence of revolutionary violence. The most remarkable instance, however, of the effects of the Revolution is to be found in the case of Mackintosh. In one sense Mackintosh can hardly be regarded as an historian; in another sense he is the most philosophic historian that ever lived. He accomplished so little that his fame rests on a small basis;

Mackintosh.

but the little which he accomplished is remarkable for so much knowledge, research, and discrimination, that his studies deserve especial attention. A Scotchman by birth, Mackintosh was educated in an atmosphere peculiarly favourable to careful thought. Born in 1765, he grew up to manhood whilst Adam Smith was producing the 'Wealth of Nations.' He was originally intended for the medical profession, and he did not change his plans, and decide on studying for the English bar, till he was more than twenty-four years of age. He arrived in London on the eve of the French Revolution; but he arrived with views which were already formed, and which were not liable to be easily disturbed by the force of popular passion. The Revolution occurred; and Mackintosh, like Paine, endeavoured to reply to Burke's reflections upon it. Paine had addressed the 'Rights of Man' to the middle orders of society; Mackintosh intended his 'Vindiciæ Gallicæ' to be read by thinkers like himself. His thoughtful work gained him at once a very great reputation: it apparently marked him out for a high position in the ranks of the Whig party. Yet Mackintosh had hardly won his first success, and defeated Burke, as his admirers declared, in argument, when he began to doubt the justice of his own conclusions. He quailed, as Burke had quailed before him, at the excesses of the Revolution; declared that he had been seduced by the love of what he had thought liberty; that he had been undeceived by a melancholy experience; and that he had been the dupe of his own enthusiasm.[1] Once convinced of the error of his previous conclusions, his course was rapid; till he, at last, brought himself to admit that he had no zeal for anything except the destruction of the French Revolution.[2]

Little or no attention has hitherto been paid to the remarkable alteration which was thus effected in Mackin-

[1] See his letter to Burke in Mackintosh, vol. i. p. 87. [2] Ibid. p. 143.

CHAP. IV.

tosh's opinions. Yet the change is surely one of the most noteworthy that ever occurred in the mind of man. That the ablest defender of the French Revolution should have no zeal for anything but the ruin of the cause, which he had won his spurs in upholding, is even more singular than the conduct of Burke, in the evening of his days, on the same subject. The force of a reaction, which induced Mackintosh to reverse his published opinions, must have been great indeed. Mackintosh's subsequent career, however, makes the change seem all the more remarkable. At the beginning of the nineteenth century he accepted the Recordership of Bombay, and consequently retired for a few years of his life to the comparative quiet of a residence in India. In India he was removed from the agitations which had influenced his opinions, and was able to resume the habits of study and thought which were his chief solace. He returned from India in 1811, and accepted a seat in Parliament. But it was soon evident that, in the interval of his Indian office, he had forgotten the fears with which Revolution had inspired him, and had reverted to his original opinions. His was the voice which was raised the loudest, and which was heard most frequently, in defence of Revolution in South America. He was the statesman who was the foremost opponent to the Foreign Enlistment Act, and who desired to allow the rebel colonists to carry on the war against Spain from the shores of this country. His later opinions, in short, were reconcileable with the views which he had commenced his career by propounding. They were irreconcileable with the opinions which his horror of revolutionary excesses made him temporarily adopt in his middle age.

Revival of poetry.

Mackintosh, then, represents in his own person three distinct phases of thought. He began his life full of the liberal philosophy which men like Bentham were proclaiming. He participated in the reaction which was

occasioned by Revolutionary excess, and he ultimately reverted to the old philosophic habits and Liberal tendencies which had distinguished his earlier career. No other of his leading contemporaries followed so closely the successive changes of opinion which distinguished this remarkable period of history; but nearly all of them felt more or less acutely the force of the passions which the Revolution in France had excited. This circumstance, it is believed, will be much more apparent on a careful review of the imaginative authors who lived and wrote at the same time. A poet, indeed, in ordinary times, is probably less influenced than any other person by political passions. But, when a poet does feel the force of a great popular movement, he feels it more acutely than his other contemporaries, because he is more impressionable than they are. It is easy to see now that many circumstances pointed to a great revival of poetry at the close of the eighteenth century, but that the direction which the revival would assume was doubtful. The great intellectual activity which characterised the period was almost certain to produce the rise of a new author of works of imagination. The intellectual movement was most visible in Scotland, and Scotland accordingly led the way in rescuing poetry from the degraded position to which Pope's imitators had consigned it. In metaphysics Scotland produced Hume and Reid; in history, Hume and Robertson; in physics, Black and Hutton; in physiology, Hunter; and in poetry Burns. The sturdy strength of Burns's language did more than the most polished criticism could have done to demonstrate the inherent weakness of the smooth poetry of the day. Here was a poet, without culture, without finish, clothing his vigorous thoughts in vigorous language, and employing the almost unintelligible words which he had learned 'bousing at the nappy' and following the plough. Yet the very first edition of his works secured his popu-

CHAP. IV.

larity. The Cotter's Saturday Night, Tam o'Shanter's rollicking ride, the Jolly Beggars' carouse, the exquisite lines to his dead Mary, proved the variety of his fertile genius, and justified the popularity which his writings at once acquired. The vigorous and beautiful poetry which Burns thus produced gave men a new standard of criticism. The decasyllabic metre, which Pope had made fashionable, was at once discarded, and most of the great writers of the period adopted either original or other styles.

Crabbe.

There is, indeed, one poet, who forms an exception to this rule. Crabbe was born in 1754; his earliest poem, 'The Library,' was published in 1781; and, though his literary life extended till 1819, his style was formed before Burns's vigorous language had revolutionised poetry. He could not escape from the groove in which his ideas moved, and he continued till the close of his life composing the jingling decasyllabic verse which he had made popular at the beginning of it. His poems were the natural consequence of his position in life. He was born at Aldborough, a town which is now rising into a dreary watering-place, but which was then a little fishing hamlet, returning two members to Parliament. Abandoning medicine, for which he had originally been designed, for literature, he was ordained; accepted in the first instance the curacy of his native borough, and afterwards some desirable pieces of preferment which the Duke of Rutland's partiality obtained for him. His usual method, in writing poetry, was to string together a variety of stories which he had learned in the ordinary rounds of a country parish. Every one of his parishioners was, in his eyes, a hero; every village lass a heroine. This one had married for money, and had been unhappy; another had married for love, and was happy. One man wanted a family, and had no children; another had a troop of children and no money. One pretty girl had

been seduced and deserted by a villain; another had resisted temptation and had married happily in her own rank of life. Simple stories of this kind could, of course, be collected in every almshouse and every cottage. Crabbe strung them together in very rythmical couplets and called them poetry. The generation in which he wrote read, approved, and admired them. But the poems, after all, were not poetry, but mere tales in rhyme. There was nothing but the metre to distinguish them from prose.

The critic who desires to understand the nature of the great poetical revival which took place towards the close of the eighteenth century cannot do better than compare the verses of Crabbe with the poetry of Burns. The purer taste, which Burns had originated, almost immediately produced a new school of poetry: the two men who were his leading successors in this school were also Scotchmen. Campbell and Scott, however, both commenced their poetical careers after the outbreak of the French Revolution; and both of them felt the convulsion which was shaking society to the centre. But the feelings which were thus excited affected the two writers in very different ways. It was Campbell's especial characteristic to be always looking forward; it was Scott's habit to be always looking back. Campbell's first great poem, 'The Pleasures of Hope,' was written at a period when the hopes of freedom had fallen to the lowest ebb. Liberty in France had been extinguished by military ambition; Poland had been cruelly partitioned among the neighbouring empires. Campbell described the fall of freedom in some of the most beautiful lines which were ever composed; and the vigour of his descriptions breathed new life into the cause of the popular party, both in England and Europe. The generous feelings which Campbell thus displayed may be traced through his later works. In 'Gertrude of Wyoming,' for instance, which ranks second

Campbell.

CHAP. IV.

among his longer pieces, the author's sympathy is with the Americans in rebellion against the British Empire.

A love of freedom, then, is the distinguishing characteristic of Campbell's poetry. Twenty years later his disposition might possibly have driven him into the violent language which some of his successors habitually used. But Campbell was not exposed to the influences to which Byron and Shelley afterwards succumbed. He began to write amidst the reaction which revolutionary excesses had occasioned. Like Mackintosh, he shared the generous feelings which were contained in the 'Vindiciæ Gallicæ,' but, like Mackintosh, he was horrified at the excesses of the Revolution. In Campbell's verse Britain is the land of freedom, and the navy's glory is shared by all Britons. It is recorded that, on one occasion, his enthusiasm for the cause of liberty exposed him to some suspicion. He was arrested, and his papers were seized. But the sheriff, who made the arrest, found in the poet's travelling cases the few lines 'Ye Mariners of England,' which are perhaps the most heartstirring national verses in the language. No better refutation could have been given to the unworthy suspicions which had been cast on the author.

Campbell, then, was full of the generous ideas which he must have learned in his very boyhood; but equally ardent in his enthusiastic support of the war with France in which his country was engaged. Scott never looked forward. There is hardly a passage either in his writings or in his biography which can be quoted to prove that he thought that the succeeding age was likely to be more generous or more happy than the preceding one. His ideas were essentially antiquarian, and all his best pieces dealt with former ages. 'The Lay' is a tale of Border warfare; 'Marmion' of Flodden; 'The Lady of the Lake' of James V.; 'The Lord of the Isles' of Bruce; 'Rokeby' of the civil wars of the seventeenth century. The same

Scott.

thing is true of the novels which the great author subsequently produced with marvellous rapidity. The first of them all was a tale of 'sixty years since'; 'Guy Mannering' was, chronologically, a continuation of 'Waverley'; 'The Antiquary' of 'Guy Mannering.' But the third of the series only brought the author up to the period of his own youth. Having ventured so near his own time, Scott immediately reverted to the period on which he was fondest of dwelling. 'Rob Roy' is a story of the middle of the eighteenth century; 'Old Mortality' of the seventeenth; 'The Black Dwarf' of the earlier years of the eighteenth century. The 'Legend of Montrose' is a tale of the civil wars; 'The Heart of Midlothian' of George II.; the 'Bride of Lammermoor' belongs to a still earlier period. 'The Monastery,' 'The Abbot,' and 'Kenilworth' are all stories of the sixteenth century; while in 'Ivanhoe' the novelist carries his readers back to the days of the Crusades. This list, which it would be possible to extend, includes the whole of Scott's earlier novels. The mere recital of it makes it obvious that Scott refrained, as a rule, from writing about his own times, and that his thoughts were almost always concentrated on the wild life which his fellow-countrymen had led in previous ages.

Yet Scott, antiquarian as he was, felt the force of the reaction in which nearly all his contemporaries participated. Almost every line of his writings is intensely national. But there is the broadest distinction between the nationality of Scott and the nationality of Campbell. There is hardly a line in Campbell to show that he is a Scotchman. 'Ye mariners of England, that guard our native seas;' 'And England sent her men of men the chief;' 'Now, joy, old England, raise, for the tidings of thy might,' 'Steer, helmsman, till you steer our way by stars beyond the line: we go to found a realm, one day, like England's self to shine,' are

CHAP. IV.

a few examples of the many which might be quoted to prove that, in Campbell's verse, his individuality as a Scotchman is almost always merged in his nationality as an Englishman. But Scott, on the contrary, never forgets he is a Scotchman. 'It is the harp of the North' which he desires to waken. It is of the old times and old manners, before 'a stranger filled the Stuarts' throne,' that the latest minstrel sung. He cannot avoid the passing wish that 'Flodden had been Bannockburn.' The hero of his first novel is an Englishman, but an Englishman who, amidst Scotch surroundings, strikes a blow for Prince Charlie at Preston Pans. This distinction between the two authors was the inevitable consequence of their different dispositions. A Scotchman who was always looking back was sure to dwell upon the old rivalries of the Scotch and English; while a Scotchman who was always looking forward was as certain to remember that the thoughts and interests of the two nations had become identical. Scott, to the end of his life, was never able to free himself entirely from the old Scotch feeling. George IV., indeed, won his heart; but then George IV. put on a Stuart tartan in Edinburgh. The only occasion on which Scott seriously attempted to interfere with politics was on the attempt of Parliament to extend to Scotland a measure of currency reform which it was applying to England.

The intense love of his own country which is perceptible in all of Scott's novels accounts, however, for much of their beauty and much of their popularity. He saw Scotland as no one had ever seen it before. Up to the time at which he wrote there was no general taste for scenery. It is a striking observation of a forgotten writer, which has been reproduced by Mackintosh, that 'there is no single term in Greek or Latin for prospect.' 'So recent is the taste for scenery,' wrote Mackintosh on another occasion, 'that a tour through Great Britain, published

in 1762, speaks of Westmoreland as remarkable only for wildness, notices Winandermere only for its size, Ullswater for char, and at Keswick passes the poor lake entirely.'[1] There is hardly a line in Burns to show that he had any appreciation for the grander features of his native land: his most exquisite imagery is taken from objects found in lowland as well as in upland—a mountain daisy, a mouse, a field of poppies. Scott, on the contrary, forgets the daisy in looking at the bolder features in the landscape. He is the Turner among poets. His heroes and heroines move among the lovely valleys of his native land, or sail along the sublime coast of Western Scotland; but they are only the accompaniments to the landscape, the figures in the foreground of the painter. Scott's works have, in consequence, become a guide-book to Scotland, and have taken thousands of visitors to the borderland in which he lived and wrote.

Scott's antiquarian tastes saved him from feeling the shock of the Revolution so acutely as other writers. He may be said to have represented all that was best in the Conservatism of the period in which he wrote. Three other writers, his friends and contemporaries, were moved by the remarkable reaction to which Burke and Mackintosh succumbed. Southey is the most prominent example of the effects of this reaction. He had begun life as a Radical; he had written a short drama, 'Wat Tyler,' in which he had openly advocated Radical principles. 'Curse on these taxes!' says Hob Carter, in this play: 'one succeeds another':— Southey.

> Our ministers, panders of a king's will,
> Drain all our wealth away, to fill their armies
> And feed the crows of France. Year follows year,
> And still we madly prosecute the war:
> Draining our wealth, distressing our poor peasants,
> Slaughtering our youths—and all to crown our chiefs
> With glory!—I detest the hell-sprung name.

[1] Mackintosh, vol. ii. pp. 97, 126.

CHAP. IV.

This wild declamation was written in 1794, when Britain was at war with France. About four years afterwards, Southey composed the much better known lines on the battle of Blenheim :—

'Now tell us what 'twas all about,'
Young Peterkin, he cries;
And little Wilhelmine looks up
With wonder-waiting eyes.
'Now tell us all about the war,
And what they fought each other for.'

'It was the English,' Kaspar cried,
'Who put the French to rout:
But what they fought each other for
I could not well make out.
But everybody said,' quoth he,
'That 'twas a famous victory.'

. . . . . .

'Why, 'twas a very wicked thing,'
Said little Wilhelmine.
'Nay, nay, my little girl,' quoth he,
'It was a famous victory.'

. . . . . .

'But what good came of it at last?'
Quoth little Peterkin.
'Why, that I cannot tell,' said he,
'But 'twas a famous victory.'

It is evident, from these extracts, that, up to the close of the eighteenth century, Southey still retained his earlier opinions, and detested the French war. But, in the nineteenth century, all his opinions were altered. Instead of counselling peace, he desired the prolongation of the struggle.

Who counsels peace at this momentous hour?

he exclaimed in 1814.

Woe, woe to England! woe and endless shame,
If this heroic land,
False to her feelings and unspotted fame,
Hold out the olive to the tyrant's hand.

Hob Carter's reasoning and little Wilhelmine's objections were both forgotten: Napoleon's victories had done more than all the Revolutionary excesses, and had made the poet of peace-at-any-price the fiery advocate of the war. His old friends, the Radicals, still retained their former opinions, and desired peace. Southey, therefore, had no alternative but to join the Tory party and become a courtier. The violence of his earlier Radicalism was soon effaced by the fury of his later Toryism. His language towards Napoleon was simply brutal:—

> Too cold upon the road was he;
> Too hot had he been at Moscow;
> But colder and hotter he may be,
> For the grave is colder than Muscovy;
> And a place there is to be kept in view,
> Where the fire is red and the brimstone blue.

The indecency of these lines is, however, less marked than the profanity of the 'Vision of Judgment.' Byron's satire has given that poem an immortality which it would never otherwise have gained. But Southey's poem is more profane than even Byron's. Southey really ventured on anticipating the judgment of heaven; Byron only intended to sneer at Southey's gross presumption.

Southey's contemporaries had no words to express their scorn for his conversion to Toryism.

> And now, my epic renegade, what are ye at?

says Byron, in 'Don Juan.'

> He had written praises of a regicide;
> He had written praises of all kings whatever;
> He had written for republics far and wide,
> And then against them bitterer than ever.
> . . . . . .
> He had sung against all battles, and again
> In their high praise and glory.

So Byron wrote on another occasion. In one sense this

CHAP. IV.

charge was unjust. Southey, in passing over from the extreme of Radicalism to the Tory party, was in reality only a type of the reaction which affected many other of his contemporaries. Vainer than most of them, his conversion was later than theirs. More violent than most of them, it was much more thorough. Southey's egregious vanity is visible throughout his writings:—

> Come, listen to a tale of times of old!
> Come, for ye know me. I am he who sang
> The Maid of Arc, and I am he who framed
> Of Thalaba the wild and wondrous song.

Such was the invitation with which he besought the public to attack the most formidable of his 'epic mountains,' 'Madoc.' 'Madoc' failed; and it deserved to fail. Prescott, since 'Madoc' was published, has travelled over the same ground in his history of the conquest of Mexico; and Prescott's prose is more eloquent and more poetical than Southey's blank verse. Southey's self-conceit, however, never suffered from his failure. The public would not read 'Madoc.' So much the worse for the public. The author knew that its execution was perfect, that it could not be better. Well might Macaulay write of him that he was arrogant beyond any man in literary history: for his self-conceit was proof against the severest admonitions.[1]

Coleridge.

Southey's name is usually associated with that of the two other lake poets—as they are called—Wordsworth and Coleridge. The career of the three authors was, in many respects, very similar. All three began life as Liberals. All three were induced, either by the effects of the Revolution or by the results of the war, to change their opinions and become Tories. Coleridge, who was closely connected with Southey by marriage ties, seems to have passed through the same phases of thought as his

[1] Trevelyan's *Macaulay*, vol. ii. p. 458.

kinsman. But it is less easy to follow Coleridge than to follow Southey, because it is more difficult to appreciate the full meaning of his conclusions. He loved to be mysterious and obscure; and this mystery and obscurity is constantly visible in his most beautiful poetry. Why was the Ancient Mariner to be doomed to perpetual misery because he had shot an albatross? Why was the exquisitely pure Lady Christabel to be cursed for the performance of an act of Christian charity? The argument offends the reason as much as the language charms the sense. The same mystery which pervades the writer's poetry is to be found in his political writings. In the course of 1817 Southey and Coleridge both wrote to the Prime Minister to protest against the seditious writings of the time. Southey's letter was characteristically plain. 'Make transportation the punishment' of seditious writings was the advice of the author of 'Wat Tyler.' Coleridge apparently meant to say the same thing. For he told Lord Liverpool that 'the fan is still in the hand,' and went on, instead of concluding the text, to pray God that his lordship might carry out 'the necessary process in meekness.' But the minister confessed that he could not 'well understand' the poet's long letter; and probably everyone, who has since read Lord Liverpool's memoirs, has equally failed to understand it.[1] The mystery, then, in Coleridge's language makes it difficult to follow his changes of opinion; but amidst all the mystery it is evident that, like Southey, he began life as a Liberal, and that, like Southey, he abandoned his old friends, and altered his old principles.

CHAP. IV.

It ought to be possible to follow the growth of Wordsworth's mind much more accurately than that of either Southey or Coleridge. In the 'Prelude'—one of the dullest of his poems—the author has related the story

Words-worth.

[1] For the letter see *Liverpool*, vol. ii. pp. 298–307.

CHAP. IV.

of his life, and has examined the various phases of his thoughts. He was born in the Lake Country; and in due course was sent to Cambridge. He visited London, he made a tour in France, and felt—as far as his calm temperament was capable of feeling—the stir of the Revolution. His mild disposition, however, was horrified by the bloodshed which disgraced the cause of liberty; and he retreated to his native hills for the calm and the leisure which were essential to his happiness. There he learned, to his inexpressible delight, that Robespierre was dead; and there he described the impression which the news made upon him:—

> Nor was a doubt,
> After strict question, left upon my mind,
> That he and his supporters all were fallen.

It is evident from this short analysis that Wordsworth's Liberalism had flowed originally in a very peaceful current, and that his subsequent Toryism was equally tranquil. The poet's nature was averse from the violent agitations of political warfare. The aim of his existence was to pass his time without any definite object before him: 'Days of sweet leisure, taxed with patient thought, abstruse.' He shrank from the bustle of humanity. In his youth London had seemed to him a 'monstrous anthill on the plain of a too busy world.' In his old age he protested against the quiet of his native valleys being desecrated by the whistle of a railway engine. Even when he went to Cambridge he could not shake off the desultory habits which were a part of his nature. He gravely narrates how he went

> From shop to shop about my own affairs;
> To Tutor or to Tailor, as befel;
> From street to street with loose and careless mind.

The loose and careless mind, which he acknowledged in his youth, was visible in his later writings. He is,

perhaps, the only great author who would have openly acknowledged that he had forgotten the name of a place, and that he was too careless to search for it.

> Or to that rural castle, name now slipped
> From my remembrance, where a lady lodged
> By the first Francis wooed.

The leisurely life which Wordsworth thus led accounts for the placid nature of his political feelings. Like Southey, he had felt the force of the reaction against Liberalism. But, unlike Southey, he had retired to muse away his time in philosophic leisure. Amidst the calm of the beautiful scenery of the Lakes he composed the greater portion of his numerous poems. The circumstances under which these works were produced probably account for the ridicule with which they were received at the time, and the popularity which they have acquired in a later age. The active intellects of the generation to whom they were addressed had no patience for

> The simple Wordsworth, framer of a lay
> As soft as evening in his favourite May.

The many obscure and involved passages,[1] by which his finest poems are marred, increased this feeling; and the length to which many of his puerile fancies were worked out made critics yawn or even smile.[2] But the more reflecting generation by which these commentators were succeeded appreciated the philosophic harmony of the poet's writings; and admired, as they deserved to be admired, the many fine passages which are scattered through the 'Excursion.'[3]

[1] See, for instance, the clumsy sentence in the sixth book of the 'Excursion,' in which the poet prays that the modern priesthood may be as constant as their forefathers.

[2] M. Taine says: 'Certainly a cat playing with three dry leaves may furnish a philosophical reflection, and figure forth a wise man sporting with the fallen leaves of life. But eighty lines on such a subject makes us yawn—much worse, smile.'—*Hist. of English Literature*, vol. ii. p. 262.

[3] There are four passages in the 'Excursion,' which are probably as fine as any that have been composed

CHAP. IV.

The preceding remarks will probably be sufficient to prove that many of the poets of the period participated in the reaction which Revolutionary excess and European war provoked among all classes of Englishmen. Scott represents the calm Conservatism which would have disapproved revolution under any shape or at any period; Campbell, like Mackintosh, the small section of Liberals, whose affection for their country exceeded even their love for their opinions; Southey, Coleridge, and Wordsworth, the reaction against Revolutionary extravagance. There were, however, three other poets, endowed with probably even greater talents than those who have been mentioned, who were affected in other ways by the stirring events of the times in which they lived. Chronologically Moore ranks as the first of these. Moore's thoughts naturally rested on other subjects than those with which his contemporaries were occupied. He was an Irishman. His father was a Roman Catholic tradesman in Dublin. He grew up to manhood during the most critical period of Irish history. While a mere child his country achieved a legislative independence. Before he had reached man's estate the Rebellion of 1798 had deluged it with blood. Moore became the biographer of the unfortunate young nobleman who was one of the most conspicuous leaders in this revolt. Revolution, in his eyes, was a totally different thing to revolution in the eyes of Campbell and Southey. They associated it with the scenes in Paris, which had shocked a continent. He associated it with the yearnings of his fellow-countrymen for freedom from Saxon rule. In

Moore.

during the present century. The first is the well-known 'Exchange the shepherd's frock of native grey for robes with royal purple tinged,' &c. The second is the reflection, 'How from his lofty throne the sun can fling colours as bright on exhalations bred by reely pool or pestilential swamp, as by the rivulet sparkling where it runs.' The third is the comparison of moral truth to the water-lily. The fourth, the reflection that as the murmurings of the shell expresses to the child 'mysterious union with its native sea, e'en such a shell the universe itself is to the ear of faith.'

Moore's verse a rebel is always a hero. The Peri tries to open the gates of Paradise with the last drop of blood shed by the last defender of his country's liberties:—

> Oh, if there be on this earthly sphere,
> A boon, an offering heaven holds dear,
> 'Tis the last libation Liberty draws
> From the heart that bleeds and breaks in her cause.

Hafed, the hero of the Fire-worshippers, is a rebel against Mussulman rule. Hinda, the daughter of the Moslem chieftain, is taught to regard him as a monster in human shape. She falls in with the so-called monster, and passionately loves the man. No one, however, can avoid perceiving that, while Moore was writing of Persia and Hafed, he was in reality thinking of Ireland and Lord Edward Fitzgerald. The poem is an eloquent appeal for the heroes of 1798.

If Moore had remained in Ireland the passionate love which he felt for his country and her wrongs would probably have driven him into violent invective against her oppressors. Instead of remaining in Ireland, however, he came to London. In London his admirable social qualities introduced him to the best society, and made him an universal favourite. He could not avoid perceiving that the relentless persecutors of his unfortunate fellow-countrymen had, after all, various good qualities, and that many of them were just as anxious to relieve the Irish from religious disabilities as the poet was himself. In consequence, instead of becoming violent, he occupied his time in laughing at the peculiarities of Castlereagh's confused sentences and in composing the beautiful melodies which gave everyone an enduring interest in Ireland. In this way he not only produced the most exquisite songs in the language, but he concurrently composed some of the best satires that were ever written. Birth had made Moore an advocate for rebellion. Society had stripped his advocacy of it of every shadow of bitterness.

CHAP. IV.

Byron.

Very different was the course of two of his contemporaries. Byron is probably the greatest poet that Britain has produced since the days of Dryden. He is, perhaps, the most thorough master of words that ever lived. His most beautiful passages bear comparison with the noblest poetry in the language; and his longest poems, full of faults as they are, are magnificent monuments to his genius. Byron was a younger man than any of the writers who have been mentioned in this chapter. His first poetry, the 'Hours of Idleness,' was published in 1807; his first important poem, the 'English Bards and Scotch Reviewers,' in 1810. It is important to bear these dates in mind. The remarkable reaction against republican excess, which affected almost every great writer at the close of the eighteenth century, had lost its force before Byron began to write. Men were no longer afraid of Revolutionary violence because a powerful autocrat had a firm hold on the French people. Men were no longer afraid of French conquest, because the British navy had obtained an indisputable supremacy at sea. Great writers were, in consequence, enabled to resume the thread of thought which the Revolution had snapped, and to revert to the extreme opinions which the Encyclopædists had made fashionable in France, and which Godwin and Paine had endeavoured twenty years before to propagate in this country. Byron would probably, under any circumstances, have embraced the Liberal opinions which were again becoming fashionable; but his disposition to do so was increased by two circumstances, which influenced his whole career. The first of these was the reception which was given to his little volume of early poetry. The 'Edinburgh Review' was at that time in its infancy, and could not resist the pleasure of crushing a peer who had ventured to become an author in his teens. An article, which is attributed to Brougham, criticised with more venom than justice the

youthful author's poetry, and would probably have discouraged ninety-nine men out of every hundred from any fresh attempt at authorship. Byron, instead of being discouraged, turned fiercely on the Reviewer. 'The English Bards and Scotch Reviewers' was his reply to the offensive article. The public were delighted with a poem every line of which sparkled with sarcasm. But they hardly appreciated at the time the violence of the change which had produced the satire. A single article had made Byron declare war against society. He had shaken the dust off his feet and departed from his 'hapless' country.

> The time hath been when no harsh sound would fall
> From lips that now may seem imbued with gall.
> But now so callous grown, so changed since youth,
> I've learned to think, and sternly speak the truth;
> Learned to deride the critic's starch decree,
> And break him on the wheel he meant for me;
> To spurn the rod a scribbler bids me kiss,
> Nor care if courts and crowds applaud or hiss.

The attack of the 'Edinburgh Review' had made Byron declare war against society. But his bitterness was also increased by the state of his purse. He had not sufficient money to support the position to which he thought himself entitled by his birth; and he was too proud to submit to the humiliations to which poverty exposed him. He determined to travel; and his voluntary separation from his own countrymen only increased his bitterness. He returned home, and married Miss Milbanke. His marriage, if it had proved a happy one, might have reconciled him to society. Its unfortunate termination only increased his bitterness with the world. He again wandered forth with the feelings of an outcast, and avenged himself by offending a decorous public by the indecency and profanity of his poetry.

A reckless disregard of the ordinary amenities of life

CHAP. IV.

is one of the most striking characteristics of Byron's poetry. The author of 'Parisina' and 'Don Juan' had no care for what the public thought of him; but the same indifference to public opinion is visible in his political writings. England's greatest general, Wellington, is 'Villainton;' her most prominent statesman, Castlereagh, is 'a wretch never named but with curses and jeers;' her king is the 'fourth of the fools and oppressors called George.' Her Church is weeping over her tithes; her country gentlemen living 'for rent.' But, amidst his passionate hatred of the upper classes, and his sincere desire to promote the cause of liberty, he had no particular anxiety for the liberty of his own fellow-countrymen. He once declared in the House of Lords that the situation of an English labourer was much more miserable than that of a Greek, yet he made no effort for the English rustic: he sacrificed his life to the cause of Greece. His country had no claims on his affections. His most generous efforts were devoted to the beautiful land which he first saw with the marks of recent death imprinted on its loveliness, and into which he succeeded in infusing some portion of its former spirit.

Shelley.

There is a marked resemblance between the career of Shelley and that of Byron. Both were descended from ancient families. Both of them were educated in the Conservative atmosphere of public schools and universities—Byron at Harrow and Cambridge, Shelley at Eton and Oxford. Both of them were trained under conditions which were wholly opposed to the adoption of Radical principles. Both of them were married at a comparatively early age, and both of them soon separated from their wives. Both of them were remarkable for their reckless disregard of public opinion, and for the license with which they attacked every political, social, and religious institution.

Shelley, who was born in 1792, was four years younger than Byron. Like Byron, therefore, he grew up to man-

hood when the violence of the reaction against Revolutionary excess was already spent. There was nothing in the political situation to counteract the tendency to adopt republican principles which he at once displayed. But the fervour with which he advocated unpopular views, both in religion and politics, was increased by the events of his life. Many an Oxford undergraduate, besides Shelley, may possibly have been satisfied that atheism was a necessity. But the burst of wrath, which Shelley's published opinions excited, was probably responsible for confirming a view which must, at his time of life, have been only hastily formed. Many other young men have had the folly to elope with girls for whom they had no durable affection. But Shelley's poverty, his father's anger, his own unhappiness at home, his subsequent connection with Mary Godwin, and his wife's unfortunate death, all combined to ostracise him from society. His extreme principles were made much more violent by the concurrent influences of these circumstances; and the slight restraint which intercourse with society might have imposed upon him was removed. Mary Godwin's influence too must necessarily have increased the young poet's disposition to declare war against all the traditions of his own class. The daughter of William Godwin and Mary Wollstonecraft, she had grown up to womanhood amidst the new faith, which both her parents had adopted. Her connection, and subsequent marriage, with Shelley form the brightest page in the poet's domestic life; but her influence must undoubtedly have been in many respects injurious to him.

Such were the circumstances under which Shelley lived and wrote. His language, in dealing with politics, is even more violent than that of Byron.

> Men of England, wherefore plough
> For the lords, who lay ye low?
> Wherefore weave with toil and care
> The rich robes your tyrants wear?

CHAP. IV.

is the question which he addressed to the men of England in the year of the Manchester Massacre.

> Sow seed,—but let no tyrant reap;
> Find wealth,—let no impostor heap;
> Weave robes,—let not the idle wear,
> Forge arms, in your defence to bear,

is the advice he gave on the same occasion to men already maddened with distress:—

> I met Murder on the way;
> He had a mask like Castlereagh;
> Next came Fraud, and he had on,
> Like Lord Eldon, an ermine gown;
> Like Sidmouth next, Hypocrisy,
> On a crocodile, came by.

Such is his description of three of the most prominent British ministers, in his 'Masque of Anarchy.'

A man who could write in this way of the principal personages in the ministry was not likely to be fastidious in selecting subjects for his ordinary poetry. It is not, perhaps, fair to judge a writer by a poem which, like 'Queen Mab,' was published when the author was only twenty-one. But nearly all Shelley's longer poems are marked by the same reckless disregard of public opinion. The 'Epipsychidion,' for instance, is a passionate declaration of love from a married man to a beautiful girl:—

> Are we not formed, as notes of music are,
> For one another, though dissimilar?

The 'Revolt of Islam' in its original shape was so unnaturally offensive that the publisher protested against it, and procured its modification. Even in its amended form it probably presents a better key to the poet's wild opinions than any other of his works. It is a protest against the ordinary usages of society, which Shelley calls 'custom.' Cythna and Laon declare war against

this custom. The reader finds some difficulty in following the fertile imagination of the poet through the phases of alternate suffering and victory which the hero and the heroine experience. He fails to comprehend the means which enabled Cythna to enthrone herself as the Goddess of Liberty, or to appreciate the causes which produced the sudden downfall of her authority. Her flight with Laon on a black Tartarian steed is absurdly unnatural; and her subsequent conduct, or the narrative of it, is grossly indecent. Custom, in short, or, to speak more correctly, the custom which had made matrimony a necessity, was the tyranny against which Shelley's eloquence is directed, and the poem is thus fitly dedicated, in some of the most beautiful verses Shelley ever wrote, to the lady who, for his sake, had broken the bands of custom.

> So now my summer's task is ended, Mary,
> And I return to thee, mine heart's true home.

And again,—

> How beautiful, and calm, and free thou wert,
> In thy young wisdom, when the mortal chain
> Of custom thou didst burst and rend in twain!

It has already been shown that the same hatred of custom inspired the 'Epipsychidion.' A similar opinion lurks in the exquisite verses on the sensitive plant, and in the even more beautiful recollection—

> We wandered to the pine forest
> That skirts the ocean's foam;
> The lightest wind was in its nest,
> The tempest in its home.
> The whispering waves were half-asleep,
> The clouds were gone to play;
> And on the bosom of the deep
> The smile of heaven lay.

The slight review, which has been thus attempted, of

CHAP. IV.

the poets,[1] who were alive at the conclusion of the great war, illustrates the remarkable nature of the movement which was perceptible at the same period in every branch of British literature. Briefly stated, the main features of that movement were as follows:—The eighteenth century had been memorable for the spirit of inquiry, speculation, and research, whose foundations had been laid by Newton, and whose superstructure had been reared by Hume, Adam Smith, and Bentham. The outbreak of the Revolution in France, and the war which had ensued from it, had been unfavourable to calm and dispassionate inquiry. None but the calmest minds had preserved their equilibrium, and the majority of writers had been hurried by their political feelings into a violent attack on the principles on which society was founded, or into as violent and uncompromising a defence of the old system of government. During the remainder of the eighteenth century all the leading writers were, as a rule, frightened into Conservative principles. As the nineteenth century rolled on the younger writers, growing up into manhood, reverted to the doctrines which Revolutionary excess had made temporarily unfashionable. About the same time the calmer minds of the generation resumed the inquiries which had been interrupted by the Revolution, and renewed the examination of the great problems in commerce and jurisprudence upon which their predecessors had been engaged. These circumstances had, of course, a corresponding effect on the generation which was growing up to manhood. Their opinions were formed while Ricardo was explaining the doctrine of rent, while Hallam was critically examining the British Constitution, while Byron

[1] The only other poets who gained a very great reputation at the same period were Rogers and Keats. Whatever judgment may be formed on their poetry, they exercised little influence on the succeeding generation, and do not, therefore, require further notice in this chapter. It would be otherwise easy to show that the tendency of Rogers was Conservative; and that Keats, whose mind was free from political passion, simply desired to revert to the old classic poetry of the ancient world.

and Shelley were declaiming against custom. They grew up to manhood full of ideas which would have shocked their fathers: unprepared, indeed, to accept the training which Shelley had inherited from his father-in-law, but equally reluctant to defend the old positions which Tory statesmen had previously maintained. In consequence, every year that passed gradually modified the opinions of the Tories as a party. Every old Tory who dropped out of the ranks reduced the strength of the dwindling phalanx which rallied round Lord Eldon and Lord Sidmouth. Every young politician who entered Parliament for the first time increased the power of the growing body of Conservatives, who wished to maintain the citadel of Toryism but to abandon the indefensible outworks which their forefathers had defended. The old Tory policy was silently abandoned; a new Tory policy was as silently formed; and old-fashioned country gentlemen discovered, to their sorrow, that a Tory government was gradually surrendering all the old positions which the Tory party had, in previous years, resolutely maintained.[1]

The change of thought, which thus occurred in political circles during the third decade of the nineteenth century, cannot be accurately understood by anyone who omits to notice the remarkable nature of British literature during the preceding fifty years. The literary men of England participated in the reaction against revolution which distinguished the closing years of the eighteenth century. They were among the first to recover from the effects of reaction at the commencement of the nineteenth century. The younger men, among

[1] It was Peel's constant argument in 1828 that the claims of the Roman Catholics could not be resisted, because all the young members of the party were opposed to maintaining them. (See his Memoir, vol. i.) Palmerston, who was a member of the Tory government, but the best representative of the new school of Toryism, talks of the 'stupid old Tory party,' anticipating the very epithet which afterwards gave so much offence to the Conservatives when it was applied to them by a Radical.—Bulwer's *Palmerston*, vol. i. p. 171.

CHAP. IV.

whom they wrote, were thus accustomed to more liberal views than those which they had heard in the narrow circles of their own homes; and a generation consequently grew up which silently abandoned the old indefensible positions of the Tory party. But there are two other circumstances, connected with the literature of the period, which deserve the attention of the student of the nineteenth century. One of them, indeed, made only a slow and gradual impression on British politics. The effect of the other was as great as it was immediate. The first of these circumstances is the commencement of literary work by women; the second of them is the rapid development of periodical literature.

Literary women.

It is a remarkable fact, which perhaps has hitherto hardly attracted sufficient attention, that few women had ever made any great mark in the world by their abilities before the eighteenth century. The women who had gained most distinction had been famous from their birth, or from their beauty, or from their misfortunes, or from their vices, or from the distinction of their children, or from qualities which are rather admirable in men than in women. We hardly read of any famous for mere womanly qualities or for literary ability. Sappho was the only great poetess whose name has been handed down to us from the ancient world, and the lines of Sappho which still exist may almost be counted on the fingers. Jael is perhaps more highly commended than any other woman in the Old Testament; and Jael is commended for committing a treacherous and cold-blooded murder.

Effects of Christianity on the female sex.

The introduction of Christianity undoubtedly improved the position which woman had previously occupied in the world. The most graceful figures in the Gospel story were the women, who never lost their love for, or their faith in, their Saviour. The maxims of the Redeemer raised women to a higher station. Marriage,

in the light of Christianity, became a contract entered into between two equal parties, sanctioned by religious rites, indissoluble except by the highest authority and for the most solemn reasons. But man, in the middle ages of the world, hardly suited his actions to the ideal of his church. The wife was not absolutely carried off or sold; but her consent to the union was not so necessary as her father's. The husband kept a stick in readiness for the personal correction of his spouse; and society did not see anything either unseemly or unmanly in a man administering a good beating to his wife.

Women in the Middle Ages.

A life of this description was not calculated to produce women of high womanly qualities. Women became famous who, like Boadicea, in Britain, or Joan of Arc, in France, beat the men at their own weapons. Margaret of Anjou, rallying the squadrons which her weak-spirited lord had not the courage to lead; Elizabeth standing at bay against the power of the Spanish monarchy; Isabella of Spain conquering kingdoms, and subduing every feminine feeling in the most brutal persecution of Jew, Turk, infidel, and heretic; Catherine de Medici counselling and witnessing one of the most infamous of modern massacres—these are the women whose names fill the largest spaces in the history of the ages in which they lived. A period, indeed, arrived when women were known for other qualities. The severity of the Reformation was succeeded by unrestricted license; the courts of the two most civilised of European nations abandoned themselves to vice; and women obtained influence, not because they could ride, fight, or work like men, but from their beauty, their wit, or their profligacy. France and England were cursed with the rule of Bourbon and Stuart; and society in both countries was tainted with the corruption and license which disgraced their courts. License prevailed in France till it was swept away by a Revolutionary deluge,

CHAP. IV.

Influence of Queen Charlotte.

of blood. England, more fortunate than her neighbour, was purified by the accession of George III. to the throne. Great ladies who had lost their character were received coldly at court; young ladies with a character to lose reflected on the social ostracism which was the new result of losing it; and the upper classes observed that the first lady in the land, who gave the tone to society, was a little woman without much beauty and with less wit, whose only claim to eminence beyond her exalted rank was her affection for and her fidelity to her husband.

It is difficult to exaggerate the social consequences which resulted from the purity of the court of George III. Neither the profligacy of his sons, nor the growing wealth of the world, and the luxuries which wealth ensured, have destroyed or obscured them. Confirmed by the character of his granddaughter, they have perhaps, in some instances, led to faults in an opposite extreme. A single error on the part of a woman is now punished with a severity which neither time nor repentance is allowed to soften; and a woman who has once made a false step is, ever afterwards, excluded from society. Punishment, however, ceases to reform when it is known to be perpetual; and those who have nothing to hope from their good conduct imagine that they have nothing to lose by their bad behaviour. But the social consequences of a purified court are obvious to anyone; its consequences on woman's work are perhaps less apparent. Just as it is true that there were brave men before the days of Agamemnon, so it is true that there were wise women before Mary Somerville. The deeds of the brave were lost to us from the want of an historian; the wisdom of the wise was rendered useless from want of an opportunity. In an age when woman's chief claim to distinction lay either in her courage or her beauty it never occurred to woman to try her chances in other

fields. Brought up from childhood to believe in the inferiority of her sex, she had neither the education which would have enabled her, nor the ambition which would have stimulated her, to establish her equality with man.

The purer atmosphere which prevailed in the moral world during the close of the eighteenth century raised woman to a higher level. When woman once found that she was man's equal there was nothing to prevent her from competing with him in the subjects to which his abilities were devoted. There are, indeed, some portions of man's work in which it may be hoped that the mass of women may never engage. We do not wish our wives and daughters to fight our battles for us. A large portion of the female sex revolt from the notion of publicly disputing with men in the Senate, in the courts, or on the platform. But there can be no doubt that there is a great deal of work, which till lately has been solely performed by men, which might be discharged with equal success by women. There is, for instance, no reason why women should not excel in the highest walks of literature and art.[1]

Capacity of women for novel-writing.

There is, perhaps, no branch of literature for which women are unsuited. The example of Mrs. Somerville decisively proves that some women are capable of sustained intellectual exertion which could be endured by few men; and an author who is capable of sustained intellectual effort need shrink from no work. But, so far as experience goes, fiction is apparently the region in which female authoresses are especially at home. Nor is this surprising. Excellence in fiction usually turns on the capacity to appreciate and delineate character; and women have at least as much opportunity for studying character as men.

[1] Mackintosh, in 1810, made the striking remark, that 'there seem to be as many paintresses at Paris as there are female novel-writers in London. What,' he adds, 'is the reason of the difference?'—*Mackintosh*, vol. ii. p. 40.

CHAP. IV.

Vast numbers of novels at the present day are written by women, and the greatest living writer of fiction is a woman. The influence which novel-writing is giving to the female sex is enormous. 'Andrew Fletcher of Saltoun once said "he knew a wise friend who believed that if a man were permitted to make all the ballads of a nation he need not care who should make the laws."'[1] It might be said of the present age that the power of controlling thought is passing from the ballad-maker to the novel-writer. Political speeches are studied by some; sermons are avoided by many; history has only a few students; but everyone reads novels. The novel influences for good or for evil the thoughts of its readers: the thoughts of its readers may ultimately determine the government of the world.

There can be very little doubt that the first consequence of women writing novels was an improvement in morals. Few women could venture to imitate the language which Fielding put into the mouth of Squire Western; to depict the monstrous treachery with which Lovelace accomplished the ruin of Clarissa; or to relate Corporal Trim's experiences when he lay wounded in the knee. They were compelled to rely on purer scenes for their story; and society, purified by their example, refused in future openly to patronise grossly immoral publications. Women, like Scott's friend Mrs. Keith, were ashamed to read in their own chamber to themselves novels which they had not blushed in their younger days to hear read aloud in society.[2] Men excused themselves for reading 'Don Juan' because it was in rhyme, and they kept the pages of 'The Monk' from the eyes of their daughters. A purer literature was, in this way, substituted for the improper stories which had been previously fashionable; and people learned almost for the first time

[1] *Quarterly Review*, No. ccxliv. p. 382, where the reasons for ascribing the remark to Fletcher are given in a note. [2] Lockhart's *Scott*, p. 466.

that a story could be interesting which was neither improper nor immoral.

Three ladies are more particularly associated with this great literary reform: Frances Burney, Jane Austen, and Maria Edgeworth. Miss Burney's life has been admirably told by Macaulay. She was the daughter of Dr. Burney, the musician, the friend of Johnson and a host of other great men. Her father's parties were attended by characters in every class of society; and little Frances Burney, shrinking from the motley throng of wealth and talent, unobserved herself, observed all that passed at them. Miss Austen, on the contrary, who was born about the time at which Miss Burney commenced to write, passed her short life in a country parsonage and in the quietest society. The greater part of Maria Edgeworth's time was spent on the property of her father, an Irish landlord, at Edgeworthstown, in Ireland.

Maria Edgeworth.

Miss Edgeworth was the most fertile and, on the whole, the greatest of these three writers. She has done for the Irish race what Scott has done for Scottish scenery. She has sketched, with inimitable skill, the pathetic and the humorous aspects of Irish character. Her stories gave Scott the idea, which he ultimately developed in the Waverley Novels. 'He would never, in all likelihood,' said his biographer, 'have thought of a Scotch novel if he had not read Miss Edgeworth's sketches of Irish character.'[1] But there is this distinction between Miss Edgeworth and Scott. It has been already remarked that Scott sketched the Scotland of his fathers, or, at the latest, of his own boyhood. Miss Edgeworth described the Irish as she herself saw them. Scott's novels are essentially histories of a former age; Miss Edgeworth's are annals of her own time. No one would dream of turning to Scott for an account of Scotland or of Scotch society during the author's own life. But no one would venture on

[1] Lockhart's *Scott*, p. 302.

CHAP. IV.

describing Irish life, at the commencement of the present century, without consulting Miss Edgeworth. The accuracy of Miss Edgeworth's descriptions give her writings an especial value. Anyone who will take the trouble of comparing her account of the Colambre estate, in 'The Absentee,' with Scott's own account of her father's estate at Edgeworthstown will see that the writer who was describing what he had seen, and the author who was professedly drawing on her imagination, were both engaged on the same model.

Miss Edgeworth's Irish tales gave a world of readers an interest in the impulsive people among whom the greatest portion of her life was spent. When she turned from Irish scenes to delineate fashionable people in London she did not attain the same degree of excellence. She sketched the Irish faithfully, because she had lived with them all her life and thoroughly understood all their virtues and all their weaknesses. She failed to draw her peers and peeresses with equal accuracy, because she had only a superficial acquaintance with London society. In Ireland she painted portraits, in London caricatures.

Frances Burney and Jane Austen.

Macaulay has detected the same difference between the creations of Miss Burney and those of Miss Austen as that which may be traced between Miss Edgeworth's Irish characters and her peers and peeresses. Miss Burney saw a great many clever people in her father's house in London. She watched them closely, she studied their eccentricities, and she caricatured them in 'Evelina.' Miss Austen saw no one but the quietest people in her father's parsonage. The great majority of them had probably nothing eccentric about them: they would have been impossible subjects for caricature. Most of the figures in the narrow circle of her acquaintance bore a very close resemblance to one another; and Miss Austen, if she described them at all, had to dwell on the nicer

differences of their characters. In Miss Burney's first novel, 'Evelina,' the canvas is crowded with a variety of persons, and the heroine is placed in a series of sensational situations. At one moment she is pestered by a fop; at another she is exposed to the importunate insolence of a scoundrel; at a third she is embarrassed by the presence of some vulgar relatives of her own. At one time she mixes in the highest society; at another, she is mistaken for an actress at the Marylebone Gardens. She emerges successfully from the most startling adventures; and, after a series of dramatic incidents, marries, on the last page of the novel, the nobleman with whom she fell in love almost on the first. In Miss Austen's first novel, on the contrary, there is no sensation. A mother, living with three daughters in a quiet Devonshire village, becomes gradually acquainted with a few of her neighbours and their connections. One of her daughters, blessed with the most placid disposition, forms an attachment for a man who, without her knowledge, has contracted a foolish engagement which he feels himself bound in honour to keep. Another of her daughters, passionate and enthusiastic in her tastes, falls in love with a gentleman, who basely abandons her for the sake of another lady's fortune. The passion and enthusiasm of the one sister soften in the course of the tale into something like the placidity of the other. The placidity of the other ripens gradually into something like warmth. Yet the two characters are as distinct at the end of the story as they are at the beginning of it. Though Sense acquires some degree of Sensibility, and Sensibility gains a great deal of Sense, the title of the novel is as appropriate at the close as at the commencement of the work. Miss Burney, like most novel-writers, during the progress of her work exaggerates the distinctive features of her characters; Miss Austen occupies her whole time in obliterating them, and yet succeeds in leaving them at the end of her story distinct and clear.

CHAP. IV.

The extraordinary skill which Miss Austen displayed in describing what Scott called 'the involvements and feelings and characters of ordinary life,'[1] places her as a novelist above her predecessor, Miss Burney. But it is more doubtful whether she is entitled to rank above her contemporary Miss Edgeworth. In Macaulay's opinion Madame de Stäel was certainly the first woman of her age; Miss Edgeworth the second; and Miss Austen the third.[2] Yet Miss Austen has one advantage over Miss Edgeworth which is very important. In reading Miss Austen no one ever thinks of the moral of the story, yet everyone becomes insensibly the better person for perusing it. In reading Miss Edgeworth one is apt to forget the story and to think only of the moral; and the moral loses half its force from the persistent manner in which it is obtruded on the reader. The main object of the one writer seems to be to create interest in her tale; the chief desire of the other to inculcate a moral precept. There can be no doubt, too, that Miss Edgeworth weakens the force of her moral by the pains which she takes to make her whole story point to it. The reader feels that he is introduced, not to a novel, but to a sermon, and so is insensibly led to criticise the author's reasoning, instead of blindly accepting her teaching.

The ultimate consequences of women's work.

The three women who have thus been mentioned are the most prominent examples of the change which was gradually taking place in the position of their sex. They succeeded in establishing a considerable literary reputation, and in demonstrating that women could compete successfully with men in some branches of literature. It is worth observing, however, that all of them were free from the influences which affected their male contemporaries. Miss Burney's best works were, indeed, written before the French Revolution. But Maria Edgeworth

[1] Lockhart's *Scott*, p. 614. [2] Trevelyan's *Macaulay*, vol. i. p. 240.

and Jane Austen were writing at the time at which Southey and Wordsworth were undergoing the remarkable changes of opinion which have been already recorded. Yet neither of them were perceptibly influenced by the politics of the stirring times in which they lived. Women were, in fact, so completely removed from the strife of party warfare that the stormiest revolution made little or no impression upon them. Such a result could not have occurred fifty years afterwards. As soon as women had proved their capacity to compete with men in one field, they displayed an increasing readiness to contend with them in others. The authoresses who at the commencement of the century were proving the capacity of their sex were, however, unable to see the full consequences of their own work, or to realise the circumstance that their labours would lead to an agitation for women's rights on the platform and in the polling-booth which would be unconcluded half a century after they had ceased to exist.

The periodical press.

The influence, then, of the women who obtained a literary reputation in the earlier years of the century was essentially prospective; but there was another characteristic about the literature of the period, which could be detected by the most superficial observer, productive of immediate results. Periodical literature had existed for more than a century in England. But it had first obtained the commanding position which it has since occupied about the period at which this history opens. The periodicals, which had previously been regarded with suspicion and dislike, were becoming beyond all dispute a power in the State. Newspapers, in the modern sense of the term, are of very recent origin. A written newspaper would be deemed impossible by the present generation; but the art of printing was known for centuries before it was applied to the purpose of dispensing news. The newsletter of the earlier years of the seventeenth

CHAP. IV.

century was literally a manuscript letter; and the 'Weekly News'—the first paper which appeared in this country in print—was published by Nathaniel Butter in 1622.[1] One hundred and thirty years after the publication of the 'Weekly News,' or in 1753, the number of stamps issued to the newspapers only amounted to 7,411,757. In 1801 the issue of stamps had risen to 16,000,000, and in 1821 to 25,000,000.

The stamp duty.

The stamp duty, which thus forms an accurate test of the circulation of newspapers, was first imposed in 1712. It was at that time a tax of 1*d.* on each newspaper printed on a whole sheet, and of ½*d.* on each paper printed on only half a sheet. The newspapers foresaw their inevitable ruin from the imposition of this tax. 'This is the day,' wrote Addison, 'on which many eminent authors will probably publish their last works. I am afraid that few of our weekly historians, who are men that, above all others, delight in war, will be able to subsist under the weight of a stamp duty in approaching peace.' As a matter of fact many newspapers at once expired; and, perhaps from this circumstance, the tax was itself abandoned. It was, however, renewed later on in the century. At the accession of George III. it was fixed at 1*d.* a sheet; in 1757 it was raised to 1½*d.*; in 1776 to 2*d.*; in 1789 to 2½*d.*; and in 1815 to 4*d.*[2] The price of every newspaper was raised to 7*d.* But neither the tax nor the increase of price stopped the circulation of the papers. Edition after edition of the more popular journals of the day were issued as rapidly as they could be struck off; and their circulation was only limited by the mechanical impossibility of complying with the demand for them. The events of the war every-

[1] *Ann. Reg.* 1794, p. 375.

[2] Return Public Inc. and Exp. Sess. 1869, p. 429. Grant gives the figures differently. *Hist. of the Newspaper Press*, vol. i. p. 6.

where excited a feverish anxiety for news, and men of all classes bought the papers, in the hope of learning some fresh tidings from the Continent.

News-papers in 1815.

At the close of the great war there were six daily papers, published in London, which exercised a considerable influence on political affairs. These six papers were the 'Times,' the 'Courier,' the 'Chronicle,' the 'Advertiser,' the 'Herald,' and the 'Post'; and of these six the 'Times' was far the most important. The 'Times' in 1816 enjoyed a circulation of 8,000 copies. It paid a stamp duty to the Government of about 900*l.* a week, or of 45,000*l.* a-year. But even this duty was only one portion of the burden on its proprietors. The paper on which it was printed was taxed; the advertisements which were inserted in it were taxed; and 10 per cent. of its profits were paid as income tax. It was under such circumstances that the greatest journal that the world has ever seen was produced during the earlier years of its eventful career.

The 'Times.'

The 'Times' was commenced by John Walter in 1785, as the 'Daily Universal Register'; it adopted its present name in 1788. In 1803 Walter was succeeded by his son, John Walter the second. Dr. Stoddart, in the first instance, and subsequently Thomas Barnes, were engaged as editors of the paper under his management. Barnes assumed the editorship of the 'Times' in 1816, and succeeded by his ability and discretion in increasing the great reputation which the paper had already acquired. But a much greater impulse than Barnes' abilities could give had a few months before been imparted to it. In November 1814 the 'Times' was, for the first time, printed by steam. The machinery was far less perfect than that which is at present in use; but it constituted an extraordinary advance in the history of newspapers. Before steam was used it had been impossible to do more than strike off 450 copies of any paper in an hour.

CHAP. IV.

The circulation of a newspaper had depended, not on the demand for it, but on the capability of the hand-press to meet the demand. The imperfect machine, introduced in 1814, enabled 1,100 sheets to be impressed in an hour. The paper was printed nearly three times as rapidly as before, and the public could be provided with five copies with the ease with which they had previously been supplied with two. The introduction of machine-printing at once confirmed the 'Times' in the precedence which it had already attained. With one short interval, in 1828, it enjoyed for forty years a larger circulation than any other newspaper.

The 'Courier' and the 'Post.'

The circulation of the 'Courier' in 1816 was only inferior to that of the 'Times.' It sold about 5,000 copies a day.[1] It was an evening newspaper, and was in the habit of issuing edition after edition. It was first established in 1792; was distinguished for its ultra-Liberal principles; and was on two occasions the subject of political prosecutions. In 1799 the 'Courier' was purchased by Daniel Stuart, the proprietor of the 'Post.' Stuart was a Tory; and the 'Courier,' of course, adopted Tory principles. The 'Post' had been started ten years before the 'Courier,' or in 1782, and had been purchased by Stuart for a very small sum in 1785. Stuart had a remarkable faculty for discovering literary talent and for obtaining the assistance of literary men on moderate terms. He engaged Coleridge, Lamb, and Mackintosh to write for the 'Morning Post,' and he occasionally availed himself of their services on the 'Courier.' Stuart, after converting the 'Post' into a valuable property, sold it in 1803; he retired from the 'Courier' in 1816. The 'Post' has retained, to the present day, the popularity which it acquired at the commencement of the cen-

[1] So I gather from the returns in the *Ann. Reg.* of 1822. Grant, in his *Hist. of the Newspaper Press*, vol. i. p. 355, places the circulation at 12,000 copies; but this is plainly an exaggeration.

tury. The 'Courier' never recovered from the decreased demand for news after the conclusion of peace.

The 'Morning Chronicle.'

In 1816 the 'Morning Chronicle' had a much smaller circulation than the 'Times'; but it enjoyed, in some respects, a higher reputation than any other newspaper. Commenced in 1769, it was the oldest of all the leading papers. Its editor, James Perry, was uniformly treated with a deference which was paid to no other editor. He was the first editor of a newspaper who had the spirit to send short-hand writers into the gallery of the House of Commons. He succeeded in obtaining even higher literary talent on his staff than Stuart collected for the 'Post' and the 'Courier.' John Campbell, who subsequently became Lord Chancellor; Thomas Campbell, the poet; Coleridge, Mackintosh, Hazlitt, and McCulloch all placed their pens at different periods at the disposal of Perry. The 'Chronicle' profited from the ability which it thus employed, and, at the commencement of the century, enjoyed a reputation which was hardly inferior to that of the 'Times.'

Position of writers for the press.

Some of the highest literary ability in the land was then employed in contributing to the press; yet writers in the press were regarded at the close of the eighteenth and at the commencement of the nineteenth century as of an inferior class. It was supposed to be ungentlemanlike for anyone to write for hire. Reporters in 1798 were described by Abbot as 'blackguard newswriters.' Ten years later, or in 1808, the Benchers of Lincoln's Inn made a by-law excluding all persons who had written in the daily papers from being called to the Bar. More than twenty years afterwards a Lord Chancellor offended the propriety of his supporters and excited their animadversions by asking the editor of the 'Times' to dinner. The press was regarded as a pestilent nuisance, which it was essential to destroy. Southey had himself once been a journalist, yet, in 1817, he deliberately

CHAP. IV.

declared to Lord Liverpool, 'You must curb the press, or it will destroy the constitution of the country. No means,' he added, 'can be effectual for checking the intolerable license of the press but that of making transportation the punishment of its abuse.'[1]

Southey's opinion proves the importance which newspapers had already acquired. Yet the newspaper of 1817 consisted of only a single sheet of four pages, and did not contain much more matter than four pages of the 'Globe' do now. It was impossible for a paper with this limited space at its disposal to attempt any profound political or literary criticism. Before the commencement of the present century, moreover, 'the literary periodicals of Great Britain were repositories of miscellanies relating to art, poetry, letters, and gossip, partly original and partly selected, huddled together without system.'[2] At the commencement of the present century, however, a knot of very remarkable men decided on founding a new periodical of a different character. Connected as they mostly were with Edinburgh, they determined to call their venture the 'Edinburgh Review.' The success which they immediately achieved is one of the most remarkable circumstances in literary history.

The 'Edinburgh Review.'

A society had been in existence in Edinburgh for many years, which most of the rising advocates at the Scotch Bar were in the habit of joining. It was the object of this society to train its members in the arts of elocution and debate. One of them, from time to time, read a paper

[1] See the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, art. Newspapers; *Ann. Reg.* 1822, p. 350, where returns of the stamps for 1801 and 1821 are given; Grant's *History of the Newspaper Press*, vol. i. pp. 101, 172, 221, 386; *Diary of Lord Colchester*, vol. i. p. 162, and vol. ii. p. 240, in the latter of which the story of the Benchers' by-law is related, which Grant (vol. ii. p. 184) declared his inability to trace the date of; Greville, vol. iii. p. 169, for the invitation of Barnes to the Lord Chancellor's dinner; Yonge's *Life of Lord Liverpool*, vol. ii. pp. 298, 299, for Southey's opinions of the press.

[2] Stanton's *Reforms and Reformers*, quoted in Allibone's *Dict. of English and American Authors.*

at its meetings, and the paper became the subject of a general discussion. The Speculative Society, as it was called, numbered among its members some of the most remarkable men who were ever collected in one association. Dugald Stewart, Playfair, Mackintosh, Scott, and Jeffrey all belonged to it. Jeffrey was born in 1773, was educated at the High School of Edinburgh, and at Oxford, and was called to the Scotch Bar in 1794. Marrying in 1802, he brought his bride home to some modest lodgings, furnished at the cost of a few pounds, but which will always be recollected by the literary student. In these modest lodgings, where Jeffrey was in the habit of entertaining a select circle of his intimate friends, the idea of the 'Edinburgh Review' was originally conceived. The founders of the new Review mainly relied on Jeffrey, Brougham, Horner, and Sydney Smith, who was the nominal editor of the first number. Sydney Smith was one of the most formidable pamphleteers which this country has ever produced. With extraordinary powers of wit, sarcasm, and expression, his writings had an immense effect on the politics of his time. Born in 1771, and producing his most pungent work—'The Letters of Peter Plymley'—in 1807 and 1808, he was at the zenith of his reputation at the close of the great war. Smith's forte lay in unsparing and occasionally indiscriminating attack. His writings were logical; but he rarely relied on his arguments alone for the success of his cause. He did not convert his readers to his own side. He overwhelmed his opponents with ridicule. The process of damning the plaintiff's attorney has been often resorted to; but it has usually been adopted by advocates with a weak cause to rely upon. Sydney Smith thrust home his attack on the person of his adversary, when his adversary might have been beaten with more logical weapons. His exuberant wit shone forth in his most argumentative writings, and

Sydney Smith.

CHAP. IV.

dazzled with its brilliancy those who were not convinced by his arguments.

Jeffrey.

Jeffrey had neither the exuberance of wit nor the lightness of expression which characterised Sydney Smith. But he was on the whole a greater writer, just as he was undoubtedly a greater critic and a better editor. His criticisms are strict; they are occasionally unfair, but are always able; and, though many of his conclusions have been reversed by the judgment of posterity, his opinions are still uniformly quoted with deference, and usually accepted as authoritative. Before the age of Jeffrey the art of the critic was almost unknown. 'Criticisms on books were jejune in the extreme, consisting chiefly of a few smart witticisms and meagre connecting remarks, stringing together ample quotations from the work under review. The "Edinburgh Review" appeared: "its first number revived the discussion of great political principles." The public perused it with avidity; it excited "a new sensation in all classes of readers;" and the art of criticism at once attained the position in the literary world which it has ever since occupied.'[1]

The position which the 'Edinburgh Review' succeeded in at once attaining could not have been won by Jeffrey alone with the solitary assistance of Sydney Smith. But Jeffrey had the good fortune to number among his friends and associates two other men, whose services proved essen-

Horner.

tially useful to him, Horner and Brougham. Born in 1778, the son of a tradesman, with no advantages other than his own ability to aid him, enjoying no office, leaning on no patron, Francis Horner, in his short life, won for himself the esteem of all classes of society. An admiring Senate suspended its sittings on the tidings of his death in a foreign land, and voted to his memory with general approval a statue in Westminster Abbey. Horner

[1] Stanton's *Reforms and Reformers*; *vide* Allibone, *ad verb.* Jeffrey.

was an advanced Liberal, but he was chiefly remarkable for the strenuous opposition which he raised to the forced circulation of a paper currency. His exertions as a member of the Bullion Committee are said to have injured his health and to have hastened his death. His enthusiasm in the same cause inspired his first contribution to the 'Edinburgh Review.' His influence with Jeffrey was the more remarkable because he was destitute of the qualifications which Jeffrey usually regarded as essential in his contributors—'wit and fun were the first desiderata;' and Horner, who was above all things an economist, had no humour. 'He puts me in mind,' said Scott on one occasion, 'of Obadiah's bull,' and the keen point of the illustration will come home to everyone who recollects Sterne's account of that famous quadruped.[1]

Brougham. Brougham was born in the same year as Horner; but it may be doubted whether, if he had died at the same time, his death would have inspired so much regret, or his name have been remembered so faithfully as his friend's. Yet Brougham's ability was greater than Horner's, and perhaps exceeded that of any of his contemporaries. There were few subjects with which he was unacquainted, or which he was unequal to discuss with the best-informed persons. He was at home in science, in law, in politics, in history, and in literature. His indefatigable and rapid pen illustrated the most varied topics in the pages of the Review; and on all of them he wrote with a force and authority which were peculiarly his own. Brougham was a far more constant contributor than Horner. It is said that on one occasion he wrote an entire number of the Review; and he was unquestionably the most fertile and capable of all Jeffrey's assistants.

Jeffrey, however, did not rely on these men alone.

[1] Lockhart's *Scott*, p. 150.

CHAP. IV.

He was ready to accept the services of any capable writer. Scott himself was a constant contributor, writing five articles in two years.[1] With such assistants Jeffrey rapidly made his mark. The new Review obtained a wide circulation; and its blue and buff cover was to be found on every gentleman's table. The success of the Review would, under any circumstances, have probably provoked a rival; but rivalry was stimulated by the political bias which the new periodical soon displayed. Jeffrey himself was above all things a critic. I was 'much struck,' wrote one of Scott's friends, 'by the extent, correctness, discrimination, and accuracy of Jeffrey's information; equally so with his taste, acuteness, and wit in dissecting every book, author, and story that came in "his" way. Jeffrey, for the most part, entertained us, when books were under discussion, with the detection of faults, blunders, absurdities, or plagiarisms.'[2] Had Jeffrey stood alone, he would probably have made the Review an organ in which all opinions and all parties could be freely criticised. His chief associates, however, were all strong partisans; and, with the single exception of Scott, they were all strong Liberals. Horner, enthusiastically devoted to the currency question, complained that the Review was too independent, and not sufficiently Whiggish.[3] Brougham, a Liberal to the backbone, insisted on the publication of political articles. Scott remonstrated against the deepening Whiggery. Jeffrey retorted that he could not resist the wit. Scott, urging the propriety of neutrality in politics, offered himself to supply a political article. Jeffrey declined, on the ground that it was more necessary to be consistent than neutral.[4] Such a refusal could hardly have done otherwise than offend Scott. The offence was deepened in the autumn of 1808 by the publication of Brougham's article 'Don

[1] Lockhart's *Scott*, p. 105.
[2] Ibid., p. 156.
[3] Alison, vol. i. p. 334.
[4] Lockhart's *Scott*, p. 156.

Cevallos; or, the Usurpation of Spain.' 'The "Edinburgh Review,"' wrote Scott to Constable, 'had become such as to render it impossible for me to continue a contributor to it. Now it is such as I can no longer continue to receive or read it.'[1] In accordance with this opinion he stopped his subscription, and made no secret of his hostility. Scott's opposition speedily became known. Canning, a member of the Tory Government, with literary abilities of the very highest order, was naturally anxious to see a Tory periodical which would be to his own friends what the 'Edinburgh Review' had proved to his opponents. 'John Murray, of Fleet Street, a young bookseller. of capital and enterprise,'[2] was ready to undertake the publication of a serial which he had the prudence to see would bring credit to his firm. George Ellis, the warm friend of Canning, heartily supported the project; and Robert Dundas, the eldest son of Lord Melville, and a member of the Government, was also made acquainted with it. But Scott himself was the life and soul of the enterprise. The first number of the new Review was published in February 1809, and three articles in it were from Scott's pen. The great author continued throughout his career to be an active contributor to the new periodical.

The 'Quarterly Review.'

It was no easy task to select an editor for the new Review who would be a fair match for so powerful an adversary as Jeffrey. But Murray seems at once to have suggested, and Scott to have approved, the selection of William Gifford for the post. Gifford 'was a little man, dumpled up together, and so ill-made as to seem almost deformed, but with a singular expression of talent in his countenance.' Constant ill-health had soured his temper; and an acid temper made him an extremely severe critic. 'He flagellated with so little pity that people lost their sense of the criminal's guilt in dislike of the savage plea-

Gifford.

[1] Lockhart's *Life of Scott*, p. 168, note. [2] Ibid., p. 169.

CHAP. IV.

sure which the executioner seemed to take in inflicting the punishment.'[1] Gifford was born at Ashburton, in 1757. His father, who had wasted the little means he had ever enjoyed, died when his boy was young. His mother did not survive her husband for many months; and the future editor of the 'Quarterly Review' was sent to school, and apprenticed to a shoemaker. The lad hated the drudgery of his work; and he fortunately attracted the attention of a neighbouring medical man, Dr. Cookesley, who collected some money for freeing him from his indentures and for continuing his education. The boy rapidly proved himself worthy of his judicious patron's kindness. He published the 'Baviad' in 1794; the 'Mæviad' in 1795; in conjunction with Bankes he became the editor of the 'Anti-Jacobin' in 1800; and he published his translation of Juvenal in 1802. The 'Baviad' and the 'Mæviad' were styled by Byron the first satires of the age. Gifford's name was coupled with Pope's in the 'English Bards and Scotch Reviewers'; and Dr. Cookesley, proud of the success which Gifford had achieved, and probably anxious to perpetuate his own share in it, gave the satirist's name to a son, whom many Eton men still remember with affection—William Gifford Cookesley.

Such was the man who appeared to Scott and Murray the best possible editor of the new Review, which was to rival the 'Edinburgh.' Such was the man under whose supervision the 'Quarterly' at once attained the position which it has ever since enjoyed.

'Blackwood's Magazine' and Wilson.

The success which both the 'Edinburgh' and the 'Quarterly Review' achieved induced other enterprising publishers to imitate the example which had thus been set them. In 1816 Blackwood, a publisher in Edinburgh, commenced the magazine which still bears his name. He was fortunate enough to secure the services

[1] Lockhart's *Scott*, vol. i. p. 651.

of an editor who rose in his way to a distinction almost as great as that of Jeffrey and Gifford. Wilson, the first editor of 'Blackwood's Magazine,' was born in 1785; he was educated at Glasgow and Oxford. At the commencement of the century he was little more than a literary amateur, living amidst the most beautiful scenery of the English Lakes, and writing occasional essays and poetry. The business of Wilson's life commenced only in earnest in 1816; but Wilson became then something more than a mere literary man. His essays, written under the name of 'Christopher North,' won for him a world of readers; but everyone who visited Edinburgh, during his life, carried away a kindly remembrance of the tall, powerful man whose genial wit and engaging manners had made society in the Scottish capital the most pleasant in the world. Without the satirical power of Gifford, without the knowledge of Jeffrey, Wilson had a warmth of imagination which made his essays peculiarly fascinating. 'Blackwood's Magazine' acquired, under his guidance, the popularity which it has never since lost.

In the very year in which 'Blackwood' first courted the favour of the educated classes of society a very different man commenced addressing a much more numerous body of readers. The career of William Cobbett was more eccentric than that of any of his prominent contemporaries. He was the comet of the literary hemisphere, dazzling the world with his brilliancy, perplexing it with his eccentricity, and alarming it with his apparent inflammability. Cobbett's grandfather was a day labourer in Surrey. His father, by hard work, improved his position and, from being a labourer, came to have 'labourers under him;'[1] or, in simpler language, became a farmer. In 1817 Cobbett left his father's house, and began life as an attorney's clerk. An attorney's office seemed to the erratic youth a mere hell

Cobbett.

[1] Bulwer's *Political Characters*, vol. ii. p. 102.

CHAP. IV.

upon earth; and, welcoming any means which afforded him a chance of escaping from the drudgery of the desk, Cobbett enlisted in the 54th Foot, and sailed with his regiment for America. He served for seven years with his regiment. During that time he attained the rank of sergeant-major; he fell in love with the daughter of another non-commissioned officer; and he saved 150 guineas. His conduct was so excellent that, on claiming his discharge, he received the public thanks of the general officer commanding his division. His feelings were so warm that he placed the whole of his 150 guineas in the hands of the young girl whose affections he had won, and who was returning before him to England. The girl, whom he had chosen for a wife, was so prudent that she never used the money, but restored it to him on his return home. Cobbett, after marrying the sergeant's daughter, returned to America, and settled in Philadelphia. There he maintained himself by teaching English—to Talleyrand among others—and by attacking everything that was American in the columns of a periodical which he styled the 'Peter Porcupine.' Indicted for a libel, and fined 5,000 dollars, Cobbett thought that it was time for him to return to England. After his return he started a new 'Porcupine,' a Tory serial. The 'Porcupine' was soon superseded by the 'Weekly Political Register,' in which Cobbett held himself free to maintain a guerilla warfare with men of all parties and all opinions. A periodical of this character was sure to get into trouble. One of the Irish puisne judges—Johnson—writing under the signature of 'Juverna,' published in its columns a scurrilous attack on the Irish Government. Cobbett was prosecuted. Judge Johnson was compelled to acknowledge his connection with the article, and was heavily fined. Cobbett, indignant with a political party which would not allow him to publish libels on the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, threw himself into

the arms of the extreme Radicals. An opportunity soon occurred which enabled him to mark his hostility to the Tory Government. Some English soldiers mutinied. A German regiment was employed to assist in quelling the mutiny; the ringleaders were flogged, and the Germans were ordered to administer the punishment. Cobbett burst into a furious attack on the authorities for permitting German soldiers to flog English troops. The Government was advised to prosecute him for a libel. He was tried, convicted, and sentenced to pay a fine of 2,000*l.*, and to suffer two years' imprisonment. Nothing in Cobbett's life is more interesting than the circumstances of his imprisonment. From within his prison walls he conducted his paper, his farm at Botley, and the education of his children. The domestic history of Cobbett's life forms one of the most pleasing features of his eccentric character; and Cobbett's affectionate qualities never shone with a brighter ray than from his cell in Newgate.

On his release from prison Cobbett returned to his paper. But in 1816 he suddenly changed the whole conditions of its publication. Up to 1816 he had charged a shilling and a halfpenny for each number. But on the 2nd of November, 1816, he devoted the entire sheet to 'An Address to the Journeymen and Labourers of England, Scotland, and Ireland;' and the sheet was sold for 2*d.* The effect of this reduction of price was prodigious. The most powerful political writer in England suddenly became the most widely read; and the 'Weekly Register' obtained an influence which no periodical had ever previously enjoyed. It was in vain that one set of Tories tried to grapple with the bold writer by suggesting his prosecution. Cobbett knew how to advocate Parliamentary Reform without infringing the laws of the country. Every other writer subjected himself, sooner or later, to a prosecution for libel. Cobbett, in 1816

CHAP. IV.

and 1817, wrote nothing that 'the law officers could prosecute with any chance of success.'[1] It was in vain, too, that the Tories styled the Register 'twopenny trash.' Their own indignation and alarm afforded the best proof that Cobbett was writing no trash. His genius had suddenly spread the light of political knowledge through the dark nooks of England, and had taught English legislators and English statesmen to realise the power of periodical literature.

Conclusion.

There were, then, in 1816, three distinct things connected with British literature which affected the history of the time or the history of the succeeding half-century. In the first place, men were slowly recovering from 'the panic dread of change' which the French Revolution had excited. The foremost thinkers of the period were again addressing themselves to the studies which had been interrupted by the events amidst which the eighteenth century had closed. The younger writers were passionately advocating the extreme views which their predecessors had hurriedly abandoned. These authors were at once the spokesmen and the guides of the rising generation. Their works were the best proof that the younger men who were growing up to manhood had freed themselves from the apprehensions by which their fathers had been influenced. They encouraged the desire, by which their contemporaries were animated, to revert to the more liberal system of government pursued in the first half of the preceding century. The older men still adhered tenaciously to the views which they had been in the habit of expressing for twenty years. But their younger adherents doubted the propriety of the measures which their leaders were defending. Monopolies of every kind—in trade, in

[1] Cross, in defending Brandreth, laid the whole blame of Brandreth's treason on Cobbett's address. He called the *Register* 'the most mischievous publication ever put into the hands of man.'—*State Trials*, vol. xxxii. p. 876. For Brandreth's trial see *Post*, p. 451.

politics, in land, in religion—were becoming unfashionable; and corruption and abuse, defeated over and over again in the House of Commons, found, as will immediately be shown, their chief support in the House of Lords.

This great change was, in one sense, the cause, in another sense the consequence, of the remarkable alteration which was taking place in the tone of British literature. The altered tone, which the foremost writers of the day were adopting, constitutes the first of the three things connected with British literature in 1816 which deserves attention. The second is the successful effort made for the first time by women to compete in literary work with men. A few ladies, living in different circumstances, unconnected with each other, suddenly displayed in a remarkable manner the capacity of their sex, and laid the foundations of the agitation which has since arisen for the concession of what are called women's rights to women. Their labours, ultimately productive of the largest consequences, form the second of the three things connected with British literature in 1816 which requires attention. Still more important was the remarkable development which was taking place in the power of the periodical press. The foremost men of the day were writing for the papers: the papers had succeeded in vindicating their right to publish and to criticise the debates in Parliament. Reviews, written and edited with consummate ability, were instructing the upper classes as they had never been instructed before. 'Twopenny trash,' containing as much wit and spirit as the higher-priced periodicals, was circulating among the poorer classes; while rich and poor in their own house or in a tavern were eagerly reading the news contained in the morning or evening journal, The papers had been prosecuted; they had been taxed; their contributors had

CHAP. IV.

been denounced as blackguards; they had been declared incapable of being called to the Bar; but all these measures had failed. Prosecution had made them popular: the anxiety for news which the war had occasioned had increased the demand for newspapers which taxation might have checked; and the writers, who had been denounced as blackguards in the last ten years of the eighteenth century, were treated with deference in the third decade of the nineteenth century. Ability, as usual, had made its way, and won for itself a position from which it was impossible to degrade it.

The development of periodical literature was perhaps even more fatal to the old system of government than any of the other changes which were gradually undermining it. So long as political discussion was confined to the few hundred representatives of the governing classes who happened to sit in Parliament, the ruling families were able to direct the thoughts of the country. The elaborate attacks, which were made upon their system by Adam Smith and Bentham, were read by comparatively few persons. But the periodical press reproduced the views of Smith and Bentham for the benefit of the entire community. Men turned from perusing one of Castlereagh's speeches to the criticisms of the 'Times' or the 'Chronicle' upon the speaker. The opinion of the 'blackguard newswriter,' who had the great advantage of having the last word, was accepted with at least as much authority as that of the statesman; and the public, no longer dependent for their opinions on the utterances of politicians, gradually adopted the views of the newspapers which they were in the habit of reading. Legislators, indeed, still assumed that the representatives of a few rich men and a few decayed villages accurately reflected the opinions of the nation. But the fallacy, which the presumption involved, was becoming daily more apparent through the operations of

the press. The right of Parliamentary representation was denied to nine-tenths of the people. The right of meeting was about to be subjected to new restrictions. But the press supplied the nation with other means of making itself heard. Its voice resounded through the length and breadth of the land.

CHAPTER V.

CHAP. V. 1816.

The return of peace.

THE definite conclusion of peace in the summer of 1815 was hailed with the liveliest acclamations of gratitude by the people of this country. The war, with all its burdens, all its sorrows, was over; and a new era of unprecedented prosperity seemed to be beginning. The nation had undoubtedly increased in wealth during the continuance of the war; it seemed impossible to exaggerate the development which might be expected to occur in its resources when the burdens of the war were removed. The prospect of an almost boundless prosperity dazzled the eyes of the most sober observers.

A little consideration, however, might have induced the calmer minds among the English nation to hesitate before accepting this conclusion. Economists had already taught them that the prosperity of nations depends on the laws of demand and supply; and that any over-production of the commodities which a country supplies, or any failure in the demand for them, must restrict the use of capital, reduce the employment of labour, and consequently impoverish the two most important classes in every community, the capitalist and the labourer. The circumstances of the war had largely increased the demand for British manufactures. Britain was the only country in the old world which had escaped the dangers and distresses of a foreign invasion. The foreign manufacturer hesitated to build his factory on a site which might at any moment be devastated by hostile armies; and the British manufacturer, relying from his immunity in the past on equal security in the future, and encouraged

Effects of the war on capital.

by the cessation of foreign competition, reared his factory on every rivulet where there was water to turn his wheel, or by any colliery where there was coal to feed his engine. Britain, which had previously been little more than a pastoral country, and whose most important manufacture had depended on the excellence of the fleeces which her flocks produced, suddenly became the centre of every industry. Capital could be safely invested in Britain alone; and capital, as a necessary consequence, was invested in Britain. The safety from invasion, to which the country owed her new industry, was won for her by the brilliant victories of her sailors, which had swept her enemies from every sea. But the supremacy of the ocean which she had acquired gained for her manufacturers other advantages than mere immunity from invasion. The nation, whose flag waved supreme on every sea, extended its dominion and carried its trade to the remotest countries of the known world. The mistress of the seas obtained a monopoly of the carrying trade. Other nations could only obtain the produce of foreign countries through British shipowners, or on conditions determined by British statesmen. In one sentence, twenty years of war had concentrated the trade of the world in the British empire.

On trade.

War, indeed, in another sense had been injurious to trade. War is a state of things under which two or more communities endeavour to inflict the maximum of damage upon each other. It destroys life; it hampers production; it dissipates the accumulations of previous years; it impoverishes the nation which is afflicted by it. The great war must have restricted the purchasing capacity of the majority of individuals in every European country. But, though it decreased the purchasing capacity of populations, it did not decrease their purchases in British markets. They spent perhaps 100*l.* where they had previously spent 1,000*l.* But the 1,000*l.* had

CHAP. V. 1816.

been expended in the Netherlands, in Italy, in France, and in other countries; the 100*l.* was expended in Britain. War, too, though it decreased the purchasing capacity of populations, increased the necessities of governments. Every European nation suddenly launched into the most unprecedented expenditure. Every European nation found itself compelled, not merely to increase its existing revenues, but to mortgage the revenues of future years. The vast load of debt was accumulated for expenditure, which left Europe far poorer and feebler than it had been before. The inordinate outlay on maintaining armies and destroying armies hampered the industry of the existing generation, and seriously harassed the operations of their descendants. But even this unprofitable expenditure could not be carried on without stimulating the operations of the trader. Armies could not be fed, or clothed, or armed, or moved without appliances which trade alone could supply. The enormous operations of the war led, moreover, to a constant and deplorable waste of material. The waste had, in some way or other, to be made good; and the nation, which had become the great workshop and trading centre of the world, was indirectly benefited in consequence.

On agriculture.

Every operation of the great war tended, therefore, to concentrate the trade of the world in this country. A similar chain of circumstances had increased the demand for the produce of British agriculture. Agriculture on the Continent languished under a system where the men were driven from the fields to the camp, and the women, left alone to cultivate the ground, were in apprehension of the dissipation of their store from some hostile incursion. The British farmer, on the contrary, sowed his fields with a conscious sense of security. The vast warlike operations in which the British nation was engaged compelled its Government to become a large purchaser of agricultural produce. The increase of po-

pulation involved an additional demand for food, and the increasing wealth of the manufacturing classes made this demand still greater. These various circumstances combined to encourage British farming, and to augment the wealth of the British landowner. Vast as was the manufacturing progress of the nation during the twenty years of the great war, the progress of its agriculture was almost as marked.

On labour.

The marked prosperity of the landed and moneyed classes during the years of war would, under ordinary circumstances, have benefited the labouring poor. There appears, however, to be very little doubt that the rate of wages rose, but slightly, in the period, and that the rise, slight as it was, was more than balanced by the increased cost of the labourer's food. It is probable that this result was partly due to the circumstance which, in its ultimate consequences, has conferred unprecedented benefits on the British workman. The demand for British manufactured goods led to the discoveries which augmented twentyfold the productive power of every labourer. Factories were built, employing large numbers of men, and enabling the country to supply a demand which, under the old system, could never have been met. But the erection of every new factory must have entailed an enormous amount of misery on the solitary weavers who, in their humble cottages, had previously imperfectly supplied the trade of the world. It is true that the weaver could always obtain work from the manufacturer. But the weaver was a solitary man: he had no union to arrange terms for him; with instant ruin before him he was compelled to accept any wages which the manufacturer chose to offer; and, if he refused the terms, the employer had only to send to the London workhouses for a cartload of apprentices. Such a state of things must have involved considerable hardships to the better classes among the poor. The chain of events, which had

CHAP. V.

1816.

improved the position of the landowner and the capitalist, had not alleviated the hardships to which the poor were exposed.

Effects of peace.

Such was the position of affairs at the conclusion of the great war. The conclusion of the war did not increase the means or the number of foreign purchasers; it withdrew from the markets of the world the vast demands which the war itself had occasioned. The people, burdened with taxation, found themselves no richer from the termination of the contest. The governments suddenly reduced their expenditure by one-half.[1] Trade had been stimulated by the extravagant outlay of the belligerent nations. The first results of peace and retrenchment were to withdraw the demand by which industry had been sustained. Prices rapidly fell, and the general fall in prices diminished the demand for labour, and reduced the wages of the labouring classes who could still find work. Capital, to put the same thing in another way, failed to obtain the same amount of employment; the capitalists were unable to employ the same amount of labour. Thousands of labourers thrown out of employment, were forced upon the rates. The remainder were compelled to accept lower wages.[2]

[1] The British expenditure fell from 106,800,000*l.*, in 1815, to 53,300,000*l.*, in 1818. *Progress of the Nation*, p. 483.

[2] It is necessary to substantiate a statement of this character with a few figures; but a very few figures will show more clearly than a long array of numbers the change which had taken place. The official value of the imports rose, during the war, from 19,659,368*l.*, in 1792, to 32,620,771*l.* in 1814. It fell to 31,822,053*l.* in 1815, and to 26,374,921*l.* in 1816. During the same period the official value of the exports of British produce rose from 18,336,851*l.*, in 1792, to 41,712,002*l.* in 1815. It fell to 34,774,521*l.* in 1816. The foreign and colonial produce exported increased from 6,568,340*l.*, in 1792, to 19,157,818*l.* in 1814. It fell to 15,708,435*l.*, in 1815, to 13,441,665*l.* in 1816, and to 10,260,271*l.* in 1817. (McCulloch, ad verb. *Imports and Exports.*) The changes in the official values of our exports and imports indicate, it must be remembered, equal variations in quantities. The official values were not allowed to vary with every change in the market, but were as rigid and invariable as the rules with which red tape is associated. It is clear, therefore, that the first consequence of peace was to reduce our import trade by nearly 20 per cent., our export trade by 16 per cent., and to deprive Great Britain of the advantage—which the war had given her—of being the great entrepôt for

CHAP. V.

1816.

The rapid fall of prices necessarily spread consternation among the manufacturing classes; and the manufacturers had another reason for serious apprehension. By the terms of the Bank Restriction Act of 1797 cash payments had been suspended during the continuance of the war and for six months afterwards. The conclusion of peace suggested the probability of their resumption; and the bare possibility of such a result was sufficient to alarm the most sober mind. During the earlier years of the war the price of gold had not been materially affected by the issue of inconvertible paper; but its price was seriously raised during the later years of the struggle. In 1810 gold was quoted at 8*l.* 7*s.* 8*d.* per cent. premium; in 1811 at 20*l.* 2*s.* 7*d.* per cent.; in 1812 at 25*l.* 16*s.* 8*d.* per cent.; in 1813 at 29*l.* 4*s.* 1*d.* per cent. The premium fell in 1814, with the first return of peace, to 14*l.* 7*s.* 7*d.* It fell in 1815 to 13*l.* 9*s.* 6*d.* Every commercial operation was necessarily disturbed by these sudden variations. Every commercial operation had been calculated on the hypothesis that gold, which was continually rising in value, would go on rising. It suddenly fell. The price of every article had been increased with the rise in the value of gold. The price of every article fell with the fall in its value. A merchant had imported large quantities of goods, and had contemplated disposing of them at 10 per cent. profit. The mere change in the value of the currency caused prices to drop 15 per cent. Instead of a gain of 10 per cent. he had incurred a loss of 5 per cent. As a matter of fact the drop was in most cases very much greater. The rise in prices generally exceeded the rise in the price of gold. The fall in the value of gold was less than the fall in the value of other commodities.

Cash payments.

the world. The price of copper fell, at the conclusion of the war, from 180*l.* to 80*l.* per ton; that of iron from 20*l.* to 8*l.*, that of hemp from 118*l.* to 34*l.*; and other commodities were affected, not to the same but to a great extent.—*Life of Lord Sidmouth*, vol. iii. p. 153, note. Porter's *Progress of the Nation*, p. 428.

CHAP. V.

1816.

Attitude of the Ministry.

These considerations, obvious as they appear now, do not seem to have occurred to any member of the cabinet. Intoxicated with the glories of the war, ministers closed their eyes to every appearance of difficulty, and refused to see, in the surrounding gloom, any indications of distress. Parliament had never had more important duties to perform; yet its meeting had never been postponed to so late a period. The Irish members were unable to come to Westminster, detained by the 'pecuniary distress and partial disturbance' which were apparent in Ireland. Yet the Regent was advised to congratulate the Legislature on 'the flourishing condition' of the 'manufactures, commerce, and revenues of the kingdom.' The country was anxiously expecting relief, but the ministry was determined to prefer the reduction of debt to the remission of taxation. Neither the distress of the agricultural classes nor the wholesale executions, by which Irish discontent was being stamped out, induced them to turn from their settled policy.[1]

The property tax.

The property tax was the most unpopular of the imposts which the war had necessitated. It had been first imposed by Pitt in 1799, after the failure of his plan for trebling the assessed taxes. In its original shape it was a duty of 10*l.* per cent. on all incomes of more than 200*l.* a year, and a graduated duty of a smaller amount on incomes of less than 200*l.* but of more than 60*l.* The tax yielded rather more than 6,000,000*l.* a year, or about 250,000*l.* for every penny. It expired at the peace of Amiens, but it was revived in 1803, after the fresh outbreak of hostilities. In 1803 the tax was collected in a new way. The tenant was compelled to advance the tax for his landlord, the mortgagee for the mortgagor. The new system of collection proved very advantageous. A five per cent. tax in 1803 proved almost as productive as the

[1] Romilly, vol. iii. p. 213. *Hansard*, vol. xxxii. pp. 2, 63. Liverpool, vol. ii. p. 249.

old ten per cent. duty. The necessities of the war, however, compelled the Government to increase their resources. The property tax was doubled by the Talents administration, and, from 1806 till after the peace, was continued at a ten per cent. rate. The taxpayers expected that the conclusion of peace would relieve them at once from contributing to an impost which was intolerably heavy. The tax had always been regarded as a war tax; the conclusion of peace seemed the natural and appropriate period for dispensing with it altogether.[1]

The ministry, however, regarded the matter from a very different point of view. The property tax yielded a substantial revenue of 15,000,000*l.* a year; and it required some courage to dispense with a source of income which was so large and so convenient. They had the responsibility of providing for the national expenditure, and it was no easy matter to see how the task could be fulfilled if they were suddenly deprived of the most productive portion of their income. The expenditure of the year, as it was ultimately approved by Parliament, amounted to no less than 66,581,295*l.*[2] The income of the year, without the property tax, could not be placed

[1] *Report of Commissioners of Inland Revenue*, 1870, vol. i. p. 120; vol. ii. p. 184.

[2] Debt, Sinking Fund, and Civil List . . £39,302,000

Army	£10,564,070	
Navy	9,434,440	
Ordnance	1,696,185	
Miscellaneous	2,500,000	
India Debt	945,491	
	£25,140,186	
Deduct Irish charge	3,145,656	
		21,994,530
Unfunded Debt		4,784,765
Silver Coinage		500,000
Total		£66,581,295

—*Hansard*, vol. xxxiv. pp. 827–830.

CHAP. V. 1816.

at more than 52,365,000*l.* There was, indeed, a surplus of about 6,000,000*l.* in the Exchequer, which was capable of being applied to the service of the year. But, under no circumstances, was it possible to place the available supplies at more than 58,470,000*l.*[1] It was obvious, therefore, that the repeal of the property tax would involve a deficit of more than 8,000,000*l.* Vansittart and his colleagues were not prepared to face this deficiency. They were ready to reduce the property tax by one-half, but they were not disposed to dispense with it altogether. As the ten per cent. property tax yielded 15,000,000*l.*, a five per cent. tax could obviously be relied on to produce 7,500,000*l.* A sum of 7,500,000*l.* was very nearly the exact amount of the estimated deficit.

The estimates attacked, but agreed to.

At the very outset of the session, then, the ministry found itself opposed to the wishes of the country. The ministry had decided to retain the property tax at half its former rate; the country was bent on dispensing with the tax altogether. The Opposition, in both Houses of Parliament, naturally adopted the views of the country,

	£
Permanent Customs	3,008,000
Permanent Excise	19,006,000
Assessed Taxes	6,327,000
Stamps	6,107,000
Post Office	1,600,000
Land Tax	1,052,000
Small branches	122,000
Other items	5,743,000
	£42,965,000
War Malt Tax	2,700,000
Land and Malt	3,000,000
Excise	3,500,000
Lotteries	200,000
	£52,365,000
Unapplied surplus, 1815	5,663,775
Unclaimed Dividends	301,816
Money in Exchequer	140,000
Total	£58,470,001

—*Hansard*, vol. xxxiv. p. 830.

and insisted on attention being paid to the wishes of the people. There were two ways by which this object could be secured. The tax, in the first place, might be simply abolished; the expenditure, in the next place, might be reduced to a point which would render the continuance of the tax unnecessary. The conclusion of the war, it was urged, ought to be followed by large reductions in the military and naval establishments; and the ministry were, on the contrary, contemplating the maintenance of both army and navy on a war footing. They asked for establishments of 33,000 seamen and 149,000 soldiers. One-third part of the military establishment, however, comprised no charge on the British revenues. 30,000 men, the Army of Occupation, were paid by France; 20,000 men by the East India Company. The residue, or 99,000 men, were borne on the home establishment.[1] The first attacks of the Opposition were made on this establishment. In both houses of the legislature the attack was formidable. But the Government had a strong apology for the policy which they were pursuing. It was not easy to prove that any portion of the 99,000 men, whom they desired to retain, could be safely spared. 25,000 men were required in Great Britain; 25,000 in Ireland; 23,800 in the old colonies; 22,200 in the new colonies; and 3,000 as a reserve for colonial reliefs. The force intended for the new colonies was one-third smaller than that which the powers, from whom they had been captured, had maintained in them. The force intended for the old colonies was only one-third larger than that with which they had been garrisoned in 1791. The force at home only exceeded by 7,000 men the numbers which had been thought necessary before the war. The most sanguine economist could, however, hardly pretend that the force which was sufficient in 1791 would be adequate in 1816.

[1] *Ann. Reg.*, 1816, Hist., pp. 6, 7.

CHAP. V. 1816.

Europe had hardly subsided into peace; and, even if peace were preserved, the events of the war had imposed new duties and new responsibilities on Britain. The vast extension of its colonial empire, moreover, made some additions to its home reserves obviously necessary. Arguments of this character formed an irresistible appeal to assemblies of English gentlemen. The Opposition made the greatest efforts to induce the ministry to reduce the establishments. One member complained that the people were being accustomed to military display; another objected to the increased number of sentinels; a third to the employment of troops on levée days. But neither House of Parliament ventured on curtailing the supplies which ministers assured them were necessary. The army and navy estimates were the subject of keen debates; but they were agreed to substantially in their original form.[1]

The property tax rejected.

These debates had apparently proved that the strength of the ministry in both houses was irresistible. It was one thing, however, to obtain the assent of Parliament to a large military establishment; it was another to secure the ways and means for the expenditure which a large military establishment necessitated. A formidable opposition had been already raised to the continuance of the property tax. For some weeks before Parliament met Brougham had been carefully preparing for the struggle. Four years before, he had ensured the defeat of the Orders in Council by sedulously encouraging petitions against them from every portion of the kingdom, and by prompting debates upon every petition. An opposition of this character was peculiarly harassing to a ministry. It occupied night after night with a merciless repetition of the same arguments; it compelled the supporters of the Government to be in constant attendance

[1] *Ann. Reg.*, 1816, Hist., p. 10. *Hansard*, vol. xxxiv. pp. 482, 1158. Bulwer's *Life of Palmerston*, vol. i. p. 133.

to guard against the possibility of a surprise; it consumed hour after hour of public time, which the ministry could with difficulty spare. An opposition of this character is, in fact, so inconvenient that the House of Commons has found it necessary to make it impossible. A member who presents a petition is now only allowed a bare statement of its substance; a debate, therefore, on each petition is no longer admissible. Brougham himself lived to admit that the change, which was thus made, was necessary. But, in the hot ardour with which he was animated in 1816, he never paused to reflect on the consequences of the course which he was pursuing. Petition after petition was presented against the Property Tax Bill; and 'six weeks were spent almost entirely in receiving and discussing petitions against the tax.' The ministry, at first, met the opposition in silence. But their silence did not check the endless speeches of their opponents; and it deprived the public, both in and out of Parliament, of one side of the argument. It was in vain that Castlereagh complained of the people's ignorant impatience of taxation, or, as he somewhat ludicrously phrased it at the time, of their 'ignorant impatience of the relaxation of taxation.' Night after night, 'at a little after four, the series of debates commenced which lasted until past midnight.' On one occasion, after weeks of debate, every occupant of one of the Opposition benches simultaneously rose to speak. On the 18th of March Sir W. Curtis, one of the City members, moved up the House with a huge petition signed, as Brougham says, by 12,000, as the Speaker relates by 22,000 persons. Very early on the following morning the Property Tax Bill was thrown out by 238 votes to 201.[1] The burst of cheering which welcomed the decision in the

[1] *Hansard*, vol. xxxii. pp. 934, 1018; vol. xxxiii. p. 451. Brougham, vol. ii. pp. 304, 312. Colchester, vol. ii. p. 570. The Speaker's estimate is confirmed by *Hansard*, vol. xxxiii. p. 409.

CHAP. V. 1816.

House was taken up by the larger crowd which thronged the lobbies and the avenues to the assembly. Twenty-six years passed before another British minister, with new surroundings and under new circumstances, ventured to revive the obnoxious impost.

The war malt tax.

The rejection of the property tax deprived the ministry at one blow of 7,500,000*l.* a year; but the rejection of the property tax formed only one portion of the embarrassments of the Government. Lord Liverpool and his colleagues had been forced to see their weakness; and their recent defeat diminished their confidence in carrying their other proposals. Notwithstanding the congratulations which they had inserted in the Regent's message they could no longer close their eyes to the general distress. The distress was not probably greater in the agricultural than in the manufacturing districts; but the distress of the agriculturists was much more serious to the ministry. Parliament was a Parliament of landlords and their representatives; and the landed interest had, therefore, special means of forcing their grievances on the cabinet. Their distress was certainly serious. Wheat, which during the war had frequently sold for 120*s.* a quarter, was only worth 52*s.* 6*d.* in the commencement of 1816.[1] Nearly a fortnight before the property tax was rejected, Sutton Western, the member for Essex, moved for a committee of the whole House to take into consideration the distressed state of the agriculture of the United Kingdom.[2] Western proposed fourteen resolutions declaratory of the distress, and suggesting a reduction of the malt tax and a further restriction on the foreign trade in corn.[3] The debate on Western's resolutions was adjourned, and, before it was again resumed, the defeat on the property tax induced the ministry partially to give way. The duty on malt had been fixed at 2*s.* 5*d.*[4] a bushel in 1803. It had

[1] *Ann. Reg.*, 1816, Chron., p. 353.
[2] *Hansard*, vol. xxxiii. pp. 31.
[3] Ibid., p. 55.
[4] This was the English rate. The rates varied slightly in Scotland and Ireland.

been raised to 4*s.* 5¾*d.* a bushel in 1804. It had remained at that rate till after the conclusion of the war. The additional 2*s.*, imposed in 1804, was commonly known as the 'war malt tax;' and this addition the ministry determined to surrender. 'In consequence of the decision on the income tax,' said Vansittart, 'it would be necessary to have recourse to the money market, and it was of little consequence that the amount should be increased by the amount of the calculated produce of the war duty.' The surrender of the war malt tax—the matter of little consequence—involved a loss of 2,700,000*l.* a year. The defeat of the property tax and the surrender of the war malt duty deprived the Government of ways and means amounting to at least 10,000,000*l.* a year.[1]

Weakness of the ministry.

The wholesale abandonment of taxation, which the weakness of the ministry had made necessary, compelled the cabinet to reconsider their financial arrangements. The Opposition was clamorous for economy, and fastened, as all economists are apt to fasten, on small extravagances, possibly objectionable in themselves, but involving only a slight outlay. The Regent was spending money on alterations in the Pavilion at Brighton and on a cottage in Windsor Park. A serious attack was made on him in Parliament for this reason. The salary of a vice-treasurer was cut down from 3,500*l.* to 2,000*l.* A proposal to raise the salaries of the secretaries to the Admiralty from 3,000*l.* to 4,000*l.* a year was only carried by a majority of 29;[2] and would possibly have not been carried at all, if Brougham had not estranged some of his own friends by an unprovoked and irrelevant attack on the Regent. The ministry were so shaken by these divisions that Lord Liverpool officially assured the prince 'that their existence hanged by a thread.' From such a

[1] *Report of Commrs. of Inland Rev.*, 1870, vol. i. p. 30; vol. ii. p. 16. Miss Martineau's *Thirty Years' Peace*, vol. i. p. 21. *Hansard*, vol. xxxiii. pp. 457–471.

[2] *Hansard*, vol. xxxiii. p. 513.

CHAP. V. 1816.

prince it must have been poor comfort to receive the assurance that his Royal Highness was still 'true to the backbone.'[1]

Reconstruction of financial arrangements.

The support of the Regent, however, weak as it was, enabled the ministry to cling to office; but it became obviously necessary for them to reconstruct their whole fiscal policy. They had to face a deficit of more than 10,000,000*l.*; and a deficit of 10,000,000*l.* would have tested the ingenuity of any financier. The deficit indeed might have been converted into a surplus by a single stroke of the pen. Nearly 15,000,000*l.* of the expenditure arose from the existence of a sinking fund,[2] and the termination or even temporary suspension of the sinking fund would, therefore, have solved all the difficulties of the ministry. So simple a plan would, perhaps, have hardly satisfied the susceptibilities of the country, or have occurred to so plain a plodder as Vansittart, the finance minister. In place of it the Government had the folly to borrow 11,500,000*l.*—9,000,000*l.* from the Bank, and 2,500,000*l.* by the issue of Exchequer bills.[3]

The Irish revenues.

Plainly stated the financial position of the country was far from unsatisfactory. The financial prospects of Ireland were more gloomy. From the close of the seventeenth century till after the consolidation, in 1817, of the English and Irish Exchequers every pound of English money was equivalent to 1*l.* 1*s.* 8*d.* Irish.[4] The 3,145,656*l.* which, it has already been stated,[5] was the portion of the Imperial expenditure due from Ireland, was equivalent to

[1] Romilly, vol. iii. p. 236. Colchester, vol. ii. p. 571. Liverpool, vol. ii. pp. 270, 271.

[2]

	£
By the Sinking Fund	11,500,000
By repayment of Exchequer Bills	1,500,000
By Debentures and Loyalty Loan	1,024,000
By East India Debt	945,000
	£14,969,000

[3] *Hansard*, vol. xxxiv. pp. 820–856.

[4] *Return of Public Income and Expenditure*, part ii. p. 381.

[5] *Vide supra*, p. 405, note.

3,408,000*l.* Irish. The charge of the Irish debt amounted to 6,826,730*l.*; the total supplies, therefore, to be raised in Ireland amounted to 10,234,000*l.* The produce of Irish taxation, however, was only 6,000,000*l.*, or, in other words, was not equal to the charge of the Irish debt. For all practical purposes Ireland was bankrupt, and nothing but the wholesale imposition of taxation or the assistance of England could have enabled her to pay her way. For the moment the gap in her resources was stopped by the application of some small balances available for the purpose, and by borrowing. But these devices could not conceal the fact that the Irish Government was insolvent; and that drastic measures could alone prevent its absolute bankruptcy.[1]

Consolidation of the British and Irish Exchequers.

Fortunately for Ireland relief came in the most effectual shape. Before another Budget was proposed the formal union between the two kingdoms was completed by the consolidation of the British and Irish Exchequers; and the revenue of the United Kingdom was thenceforward raised by taxation which, with slight exceptions, has been equally borne by the two countries. The consolidation of the two Exchequers had become possible under the terms on which the Union had been effected. It had been agreed by the Act of Union that each country should defray the charges of its own debt (the British debt was then fourteen times as large as the Irish debt); that for twenty years Great Britain should contribute fifteen parts out of every seventeen of the joint expenditure of the United Kingdom; that, after twenty years, the proportion of such contribution might be altered by Parliament, but

[1] The Irish Ways and Means were:—

	£
Irish taxation (estimated)	6,000,000
Balance, unemployed revenue	991,570
Irish share of Lottery	100,000
Repayment of advances	111,960
Loans	3,041,666
	£10,245,196

—*Ann. Reg.*, 1816, p. 80.

CHAP. V. 1816.

that if in the interval 'the debts of the two countries should be to each other in the same proportions with their respective contributions,' it should be competent for Parliament 'to declare that all future expenditure should be defrayed indiscriminately by equal taxes imposed on each country, subject only to such particular exemptions or abatements, in Ireland and in Scotland, as circumstances might appear from time to time to demand.'[1]

No analysis of the ordinary Parliamentary accounts, however carefully it was made, would have enabled an inquirer to determine the exact amount of the Irish and the English debts. The debt of Ireland in 1816 appears in Parliamentary documents as rather less than 29,000,000*l.* The debt of Great Britain exceeded at the same time 817,000,000*l.*[2] The British debt was, in other words, apparently twenty-eight times as large as the Irish debt. But these figures gave no accurate conception of the respective burdens of the two nations. The great mass of the money which Ireland had been compelled to borrow had been raised in London; and the greater portion of the debt, therefore, which the Irish had incurred was classed as British debt. The real state of the case, however, was very different. In 1811, when the whole debt of the United Kingdom amounted to 678,000,000*l.*, the Committee of Accounts reported that the Irish portion of it was as nearly as possible two-seventeenths of the whole. The contingency had occurred which had been foreseen by Pitt; and the period had arrived for the consummation of the Union by the consolidation of the British and Irish Exchequers. It was the opinion of the best-informed politicians of those days that, if Perceval had lived, the two Exchequers would have been consolidated in 1812. Perceval, however, died. On his death the subject dropped into abeyance, and was not actively

[1] *Parl. Ret.*, Pub. Inc. and Exp., part ii. p. 385. [2] Ibid., p. 306.

reopened till 1815. The Irish funded debt amounted in 1815 to 127,865,000*l.*; the unredeemed debt to 105,000,000*l.*; and the proportion of the debt to the British debt as 2 to 13.[1] The Committee of Accounts saw that the time had come for completing the policy of 1801, and threw themselves actively into the work. The times were indeed ripe for the change. Ireland was virtually insolvent; and nothing but the fusion of her own accounts with those of a wealthier nation could have averted her bankruptcy.

The consolidation of the British and Irish Exchequers was proposed on the 20th of May, 1816. It took effect from the 5th of January, 1817.[2] The work, in its ultimate consequences, was the most important on which the Legislature was engaged during the year. It was perhaps the greatest pecuniary boon which had not merely ever been conferred on Ireland, but which had ever been granted by one nation to another. The greatness of the boon was thoroughly recognised at the time. Independent members of Parliament complained that Ireland was being relieved of all share of the cost of the war, and that the entire burden was being thrown on Great Britain. The complaint which was thus made was undoubtedly an exaggeration. The Government had been culpably negligent in omitting to impose fresh taxation on Ireland during the continuance of the war, and culpably ready to take the easier course of accumulating the Irish debt. But the British Government and British Parliament were responsible for this policy, and there was no real injustice in saying that the burdens which had been incurred in a common cause should be borne indiscriminately by the United Kingdom.

While Parliament was making these various arrangements for the future the condition of the country was

[1] *Hansard*, vol. xxxiii. p. 811, and vol. xxxiv. p. 592.

[2] *Hansard*, vol. xxxiv. pp. 588–616. Alison, vol. i. p. 126.

CHAP. V.

1816.

Critical state of the country.

becoming more and more critical. The fall in the value of corn at the close of 1815 deprived the farmers of all probability of profit; and farms in every part of the kingdom were thrown out of cultivation. Early in 1816 the Board of Agriculture issued questions to 326 persons with a view to testing the condition of agriculture in different parts of the country. In 168 of the replies cases were mentioned in which farms were unoccupied. In 37 of the replies it was stated that all the farmers who could had given notice to quit. In 103 of the replies it was stated that many of the farmers, and in 111 of them that several or a few of the farmers, had given notice to quit. 212 of the replies spoke of a reduction of rents. The average of these reductions of rent amounted to 25 per cent.; and, placing the gross rent of land at 36,000,000*l.* a year, the Board of Agriculture, in consequence, inferred that the loss occasioned by the distress, to landlords alone, amounted to no less than 9,000,000*l.* a year.[1] But the landed interest represented only one portion of the sufferers, and the class which was perhaps able to bear the suffering more easily than any other. Far more serious was the distress which was everywhere felt by the agricultural and the manufacturing poor. Everything conspired to reduce the value of labour. 'English goods were selling for much less in Holland and in the North of Europe than in London or Manchester.'[2] Manufacturing operations were consequently paralysed. Agricultural produce was suddenly reduced to half its former value; and agricultural operations were suspended in many parts of the kingdom. Labour everywhere failed to obtain remunerative employment; and at this very moment a large addition was made to the number of labourers. The navy had suddenly been reduced from 100,000 men in 1815 to 33,000 in 1816. The militia

[1] The report will be found in *Ann. Reg.*, 1816, Chron., p. 459.
[2] *Hansard*, vol. xxxiii. p. 1098.

had been disbanded, and the establishment of the regular army largely contracted. At a time when the supply of workmen was already in excess some 200,000 able-bodied men had been added to the crowd of labourers seeking for employment.[1] The hopes which the peace had raised had been suddenly turned into the most bitter disappointment.

The distress was visible in every class of life. 'Every avenue,' wrote Scott to his brother, 'is now choked with applicants, whose claims are very strong; for the number of disbanded officers and public servants dismissed in consequence of Parliament turning restive and refusing the income tax is great and increasing. Economy is the order of the day, and I can assure you they are shaving pretty close.[2] 'The number of bankruptcies,' said Brougham in the House of Commons, is 'daily increasing;' the home trade is at a standstill; the landlord receives no rent; the tenant can sell no corn. 'Upon two estates in Norfolk,' said the Duke of Bedford in the House of Lords, 'lands in one instance of 5,000 acres, in another of 3,000 acres, were offered to tenants rent-free if they would cultivate them, but none would take them.' 'Distress,' said another member, 'pervaded every branch of commerce.'[3]

The harvest fails.

Nothing seemed wanting to complete the universal misery and distress; but the cup of suffering was to be filled more fully. If labour were scarce bread was, at any rate, cheap; and, in the cheapness of their chief article of food, the labouring community found some moderate consolation. A wet and chilly spring threatened, however, to deprive them of this advantage. The harvest seemed imperilled by the rains, and corn rose in value. Wheat, at the end of April, touched 80*s.* a quarter, and the old prices seemed on the eve of returning. Farms, which had been thrown out of cultivation, were

[1] Alison, vol. i. p. 109. [2] Lockhart's *Scott*, p. 331.
[3] *Hansard*, vol. xxxii. pp. 38, 67, and vol. xxxiii. p. 162.

CHAP. V. 1816.

re-let; the incoming tenants mistaking the rise of prices, which was due to the first threatenings of dearth, for the rise of prices which had been created by the excessive demands of the war. Their hopes were speedily dashed. 'The rain it raineth every day' was the universal refrain in the summer of 1816. 'As for spring,' wrote Scott to Morritt, 'that is past praying for. In the month of November last people were skating in the neighbourhood of Edinburgh; and now, in the middle of May, the snow is lying white on Arthur's Seat and on the range of the Pentlands. It is really fearful, and the sheep are perishing by scores. Jam satis terræ nivis, &c., may still be taken up as the song of eighteen hundred and sixteen.'[1] Rain and cold were not confined to this country. News arrived from every part of Europe excepting Russia of disastrous inundations; and the weather was, at least, as severe in this country as in any part of the Continent. Some idea of its exceptional nature may be inferred from the fact that a severe frost in September killed all the vegetables in the neighbourhood of Ely.[2] The harvest everywhere failed. No single industry, except that of the fisherman, prospered; the price of wheat rapidly rose, till in December it averaged nearly double the sum at which it had been quoted in January. Even the turf in Ireland was spoiled by the heavy rains; and the Irish experienced not merely a want of food, but a want of fuel. Never during the whole of the war had Britain experienced such suffering as she felt, after the first conclusion of peace, from the combined influences of bad weather, superabundant labour, and dear bread.

Universal distress.

The distress, in the higher classes of society, necessitated the most careful economies. Luxuries were disused; and works of art, which a few months before had been regarded as priceless treasures, were disposed of for less

[1] Lockhart's *Scott*, p. 331.

[2] *Ann. Reg.*, 1816, Chron., pp. 83, 94, 101, 102, 106, 114, 136.

than a tenth of their value. Two Claudes, which had been bought three years previously for a thousand guineas each, were sold by auction in April 1816 for seventy and eighty guineas respectively.[1] It would, however, have been happy for the country if such effects as these had been the only results of the bad weather. Far more serious was the want among the poor. 'In Radnorshire and Herefordshire,' wrote Romilly, 'the prospect is extremely alarming. There must be a very great scarcity of wheat and barley. The potatoes, too, which form so large a part of the food of the poor, have greatly failed; and, to add to their distress, the long continuance of rain has prevented them from getting peat from the moors, and laying in their usual stock of winter fuel.' 'The distress in Yorkshire,' wrote Lord Darlington to Lord Sidmouth, 'was unprecedented; there was a total stagnation of the little trade they had; wheat was already more than a guinea a bushel, and no old corn in store; the potato crop had failed; the harvest (October 8) was only beginning, the corn in many parts being still green; and he feared a total defalcation of all grain that season from the deluge of rain, which had fallen for many weeks, and was still falling.'[2] But the distress, which Romilly witnessed in a tour in Wales, and which Lord Darlington saw around him in his own neighbourhood, was universal. 'Our wheat is good for nothing,' wrote Lord Eldon from Dorsetshire; 'as a farmer I am ruined here and in Durham. So much for peace and plenty.'[3] Distress rapidly led to disturbances. Riots were reported from every part of England. At Bideford the mob interfered to prevent the export of a cargo of potatoes; at Bridport the mob paraded the streets, broke into the bakers' shops, and proceeded to other acts of violence. Fires, kindled by incen-

[1] *Ann. Reg.*, 1816, Chron., pp. 54. Liverpool, vol. ii. p. 280.

[2] Romilly, vol. ii. p. 264. Sidmouth, vol. iii. p. 150.

[3] Ibid., p. 151.

CHAP. V. 1816.

diaries, broke out night after night in the Eastern counties. The pitmen of Newcastle declined to continue working at their existing wages; and a reduction in the rate of wages led to serious breaches of the peace in Lancashire. 'I look to the winter with fear and trembling,' wrote the Chancellor. Stout-hearted as Lord Eldon was, he had good cause for his apprehensions.[1]

The condition of the agricultural counties was, for the moment, the most serious. It was incidentally stated in the House of Commons that, in one parish of Dorsetshire, 419 out of 575 inhabitants were in the receipt of relief. At Swanage six people out of every seven were paupers, and the poor rate amounted to 1*l.* 1*s.* in the pound.[2] Every individual but one in a parish in Cambridgeshire was either a bankrupt or a pauper. Strong able-bodied men in Essex were often only able to earn 'but 6*d.* a day,' and wheat was at from 4*l.* to 5*l.* a quarter. Riots, under such circumstances, were almost inevitable; and, though the conduct of the people was inexcusable and unwise, the frenzy of despair may explain the outrages into which they were driven. The mob concluded that the price of bread was the result of a conspiracy among the farmers. They revenged themselves on their supposed enemies by burning agricultural produce. In the second week of May a cattle shed at Hadleigh was set on fire; on the same night a barn at Woodbridge was destroyed. The example, which was thus set, was soon imitated in other parts of the Eastern counties. Farm buildings, barns, stacks, machinery, business premises, were set on fire; and all agricultural property seemed insecure, and liable to destruction by incendiaries. The newspapers during the month of May recorded fires of this character at Bungay, at Haverhill, at Wickham Brook, at Clare, at Henham, and at many other places in Suffolk; and great

[1] *Ann. Reg.*, 1816, Chron., pp. 60, 68, 73, 127. Sidmouth, vol. iii. p. 151.
[2] *Hansard*, vol. xxxiii. p. 1082, and vol. xxxv. p. 907.

alarm was naturally created at their frequent recurrence. These outrages were, however, only indications of the disturbances which were to follow. In the middle of May a mob of 1,500 men assembled at Brandon, insisted that wheat should be sold for 2*s.* 6*d.* a bushel, and that the price of beef should be fixed at fourpence a pound. Annoyed at a refusal, they levelled a butcher's shop to the ground, and attacked the houses of other obnoxious tradesmen. Similar riotous proceedings occurred at Norwich, at Bury, at Cambridge, at Ely, at Littleport, and at other places in the Eastern counties. Nothing but the interposition of the military ended the tumult. The troops had to proceed to the extreme measure of firing upon the rioters before the disturbances were quelled.[1]

Trial of the rioters.

The ministry thought it necessary to mark their sense of the importance of the riots by resorting to extraordinary precautions. A special commission was sent down to Ely for the trial of the rioters of Littleport and Ely. Seventy-three of these unhappy individuals had been arrested by the exertions of the troops. There was no doubt whatever that the disturbances which they had occasioned had been of a very alarming character. The house of a Mr. Vachel, a clergyman and magistrate, had been broken into and demolished; large sums of money had been extorted from the inhabitants of Ely; one of the soldiers sent to restore order had been severely wounded; and for forty-eight hours the entire district had been at the mercy of the mob. A severe example was undoubtedly necessary; and men were in office who were not likely to shrink from severe punishments. Thirty-four of the prisoners were condemned to death; five were actually executed. The disturbances were quelled by these rigid measures. The district sank into a torpor of despair.[2]

[1] *Ann. Reg.*, 1816, Chron., pp. 61, 65, 67, 71, 73.
[2] Ibid., pp. 79, 90.

CHAP. V.

1816.

Distress in the coal and iron trades.

The distress of the agriculturists attracted the chief attention in the early part of 1816; yet other workmen suffered equal privations. The price of iron had fallen from 20*l.* to 8*l.* a ton; and the most serious distress resulted in consequence, both in the iron trade itself and in the coal trade, which is dependent on the demand for iron. It was stated, at the end of August, that out of thirty-four furnaces in Shropshire, each employing on an average 300 men, twenty-four were out of blast. Orders had been given for the discontinuance of work at two out of the remaining ten. The works which were thus extinguished had ordinarily consumed 8,000 tons of coal a week; so that their stoppage involved not merely the forced idleness of 7,200 puddlers, but the non-employment of a corresponding number of colliers. The distress in the neighbouring county of Stafford was even more pitiful. The manufacturing poor were reduced literally to starvation. Men were compelled to eat the cabbage-stalks in their cottage gardens to save themselves from starving; and the parochial authorities, over-burdened with the sudden load thrown upon them, were unable to provide either food or employment for the multitudes who required relief. 27,500 persons out of a population of 84,000 were in receipt of relief in Birmingham.[1] In the middle of July the colliers devised a curious method for obtaining assistance. They harnessed themselves to loaded wagons of coal, and drew them through the country. The men of Bilston marched with three wagons by different roads on London. Wolverhampton sent a wagon through Chester to Liverpool, and other parties started with similar loads in other directions. The men do not seem to have been disorderly; they everywhere displayed the strongest anxiety to keep within the law; and the steadiness of their conduct increased the

[1] Brougham, in the House of Commons, 13th March, 1817. *Hansard*, vol. xxxv. p. 1008. *Ann. Reg.*, 1816, Chron., p. 131.

compassion which was generally felt for them. The authorities acted with creditable dispatch and commendable humanity. Lord Sidmouth quietly ordered competent persons to meet the parties who were marching on London, to purchase their coals of them, and to send them home again. The magistrates in other parts of the kingdom imitated Lord Sidmouth's example; and the colliers were induced to return home quietly. A still more serious demonstration which resulted from the depression of the iron trade in South Wales was suppressed with equal ease. Wages in the iron trade were already low; and a further reduction in their rate drove the men to desperate measures. The men of Newport suddenly left their work and marched on Merthyr; they were joined on the march by the workmen from Tredegar and Sirhowy. They stopped the blast at Dowlais, at Merthyr, at Ebbw Vale, at Llanelly, and struck thence across the mountains to Crumlin, Newbridge, and Abercarne. The military were in the meanwhile collecting at Newport. Detachments were hurried up to various places; and the mob, which had increased to 10,000 or 12,000 men, gradually dispersed. The men were induced to return to labour on their miserable wages, and work was generally resumed.[1]

CHAP. V. 1816.

Machinery.

The disturbances, however, which thus took place were not confined to the agricultural and mining districts. Five years previously a sudden paralysis of trade had inflicted considerable injury on the manufacturing interest; and the manufacturing poor, condemned to forced idleness, had avenged themselves by destroying the machinery, to which they had attributed their want of work. The riots which had then broken out were known as the Luddite riots. The name, which was thus applied to them, had a very curious origin. More than thirty years before there lived in a village in Leicestershire one Ned Ludd,

[1] *Ann. Reg.*, 1816, Chron., pp. 95, 110, 165–167. Sidmouth, vol. iii. p. 153.

CHAP. V. 1816.

a man of weak intellect, the village butt. Irritated by his tormentors, the unhappy fellow one day pursued one of them into an adjoining house. He could not find the lad who had been mocking him; but in his fury he broke a couple of stocking frames which were on the premises. When frames were afterwards broken it was the common saying that Ludd had broken them; and thus Ned Ludd, the village idiot, gave a name to one of the most formidable series of riots of the present century.[1] Machinery, in the early years of the century, it must be remembered, was regarded with very different feelings to those with which it is contemplated now. The first jury trial in Scotland took place early in 1816, and related to a steam engine, which had recently been erected for grinding flour near Edinburgh, and which the neighbours desired to suppress as a nuisance. The jury, who were a little more sensible than the rest of their townsfolk, decided that 'the engine was useful, and not offensive;' so the machine was still permitted to go on grinding. But the mere fact that such an action could have been tried in 1816 explains the resentment felt by uneducated working men at the introduction of machinery which they fancied was depriving them of their bread. A working man in Ireland was fined 5*l.* by his fellow-workmen for presuming to work at a machine called a 'gig mill.'[2] In July the leader of a party of Luddites, which had broken every lace machine in Loughborough, openly declared his readiness to march any distance, even one or two hundred miles, to break any machine which was working under price. In October a large number of persons, commanded, it was said, by 'General Ludd' himself, broke thirty machines in Nottinghamshire because the frames were making a kind of lace which, in the opinion of the frame makers, did not afford remunerative employment to the workmen. The domestic history of 1816 is, in fact,

[1] See Sidmouth, vol. iii. p. 80, note. [2] *Ann. Reg.*, 1816, Chron., pp. 5, 12.

little more than a long catalogue of social disturbances. In every part of the country, in Edinburgh, in Glasgow, in Northumberland, in Lancashire, in Leicestershire, in the Black Country, in Wales, in the Eastern counties, in the mines of Cornwall, and the pleasant fields of Devonshire rioting broke out. 'On Monday, the 28th of October,' Lord Sidmouth wrote to his brother-in-law, 'there was a serious riot at Birmingham, and, though quelled at the time with the assistance of the military, it was expected to recur. The neighbourhood of Manchester was very bad, and Nottingham hopeless.' 'The lower orders,' reported Nadin, the chief police officer of Manchester, 'are everywhere meeting in large bodies, and are very clamorous. Delegates from all quarters are moving about amongst them, as they were before the last disturbance, and they talk of a general union of the lower orders throughout the kingdom.'[1] Labour was engaged in one universal revolt against the conditions of its employment.[2]

The Radicals.

Distress engendered discontent; discontent promoted disturbance; a period of disturbance afforded an opportunity for political agitators. During the preceding few years a knot of comparatively obscure persons had been busily propagating some new political principles. Either from the recollection of a famous speech, in which Fox in 1797 had insisted on the necessity for radical reform, or from the violence of their own principles, they had taken the name of Radicals. The word 'Radical,' however, conveyed a very different meaning in 1816 to what it does now. Lord Sidmouth gravely wrote of the Radicals as 'the enemy.'[3] The hands of the Radicals were supposed to be against every man, and every man's hand was against them. Wherever there was a serious disturbance the rioters were usually branded as Radicals, and Radical and rioter became almost syno-

[1] Sidmouth, vol. iii. pp. 156, 165.
[2] *Ann. Reg.*, 1816, Chron., pp. 5, 67, 100, 116, 161.
[3] Sidmouth, vol. iii. p. 276.

CHAP. V. 1816.

nymous terms. Scott, when he talks of rebels in arms, always styles them Radicals.[1] Radicalism is 'a spirit,' wrote the vicar of Harrow in 1820, 'of which the first elements are a rejection of Scripture, and a contempt of all the institutions of your country, and of which the results, unless averted by a merciful Providence, must be anarchy, atheism, and universal ruin.'[2] Few men would doubt now that Brougham began life as a Radical. 'The Radicals,' he wrote in 1819, 'have made themselves so odious that a number even of our own way of thinking would be well enough pleased to see them and their vile press put down at all hazards.' The word 'Radical,' in short, in 1816 bore a totally different meaning to that which it bears now. It is impossible to understand the history of 1816 without appreciating the sense in which the word 'Radical' was used at that time.

The Radical leader.

The leader of the Radicals was the once well-known 'Orator' Hunt. 'Hunt,' wrote Romilly, was 'the friend of Cobbett, and a friend worthy of him—that is, a most unprincipled demagogue.'[3] Hunt was a gentleman of some property in Somersetshire, and was a liveryman of London.[4] He had gained some little political notoriety by standing for Bristol at the general election of 1812, and he had distinguished himself on that occasion by a merciless abuse of almost every leading public man. But Hunt, though he aspired to the lead of the Radical mob, was in reality in the hands of the wildest agitators. At the close of 1816 a small body of obscure men, lodging in different places in London, were devising the most extraordinary plots against the Government. Among them was Thistlewood, whose desperate designs subse-

[1] Lockhart's *Scott*, pp. 412, 415, 430. *Ann. Reg.*, 1820 Chron. pp. 104, 119, 126. Knight, in the first book of Miss Martineau's *Hist. of the Thirty Years' Peace*, p. 226, says that the Reformers were first called Radicals in 1819. The statement is erroneous. See, for instance, *Hansard*, vol. xxxvi. p. 761, where J. W. Ward, speaking in 1817, uses the expression and defines it.

[2] Ibid., p. 418.

[3] Romilly, vol. iii. p. 55.

[4] *Ann. Reg.*, 1820 Chron. p. 877.

quently won for him an unenviable notoriety; Watson, 'with a better heart than head,'[1] an indigent member of the medical profession; Watson's son, Preston; Hooper; Castle, and one or two others. These men persuaded themselves that it was a very easy matter to subvert the Government, and to establish a Committee of Public Safety. They proposed—if the evidence of Castle can be relied on—to fire the barracks, to march on the Tower, and to trust to fortune or Providence for the success of their scheme. With the view of carrying out this notable plan they actually obtained some 250 pike-heads; they attempted to hire a vacant house near one of the barracks; and they treated any soldiers with whom they happened to be thrown into contact with gallons of beer. Even these miserable details rested on the evidence of Castle; and Castle was one of the most contemptible witnesses that had ever appeared in a court of justice. He had been charged, some years before, with uttering forged notes, and had saved himself by turning informer. The man against whom he had appeared on that occasion had been hanged. The same thing had occurred on another occasion: Castle had turned informer, one of his gang had been hanged, and a second transported. He had since that time been living in a disreputable house in King Street, Soho. He had now turned informer again.

Such was the man on whose evidence the theory of an insurrection against the Government mainly rested. If his story were true the most powerful constitution in the world was to be overturned by some half-dozen desperate conspirators. The more formidable features of the design were, however, soon abandoned. The conspirators made up their mind that it was no easy matter to fire the barracks, and devoted their energies to the convening of a large meeting. A placard was issued calling 'a meeting of the distressed manufacturers, artisans, and others of the

[1] Bamford, vol. i. p. 24.

CHAP. V.

1816.

The Spa Fields riot.

Cities of London and Westminster, the Borough of Southwark, and parts adjacent, in Spa Fields, on Friday, the 15th of November, at 12 o'clock, to take into consideration the propriety of petitioning the Prince Regent and the Legislature to adopt immediately such means as will relieve the sufferers from the misery which now overwhelms them.'[1] The meeting was held. Inflammatory speeches were made at it; and an adjournment was agreed on to the 2nd of December, ostensibly to receive the Regent's answer to the petition. A new placard was prepared for the adjourned meeting. The placard was headed, 'England expects every man to do his duty.' It stated that the meeting was held to receive the Regent's answer, and for other important considerations; and it went on to describe

> The present state of Great Britain.
> Four millions in distress!!!
> Four millions embarrassed!!!
> One million and a half fear distress!!!
> Half a million live in splendid luxury!!!
> Our brothers in Ireland are in a worse state.
> The climax of misery is complete—it can go no farther.
> Death would now be a relief to millions.[2]

Hunt, who had been the principal speaker on the 15th of November, was again expected to take a prominent part in the proceedings. But Hunt had probably a very shrewd anticipation that the meeting was likely to lead to a riot, and was late. The meeting had been announced for twelve o'clock. Hunt chose to think that 'one o'clock was the time,' and at twenty minutes to one was quietly driving along Cheapside.[3] In the meanwhile Watson, Thistlewood, and their friends had proceeded to Spa Fields. A wagon which had been placed in the centre of the Fields was used as a platform. The

[1] *State Trials*, vol. xxxii. 68. [2] Ibid., p. 86.
[3] Ibid., p. 304. Cf. Hunt's own account. *Hansard*, vol. xxxv. pp. 547–551.

elder Watson mounted the wagon and made an inflammatory address to the crowd. 'Are we to go on,' he asked, 'from time to time, from month to month, from year to year, calling to the Father of his people, as he is called, in vain for redress?' (Cries of 'No! no!') 'The present, then, is the time to do something.' Watson the elder was succeeded by Watson the younger. The younger Watson's politics were more drastic than his father's. 'If they will not give us what we want,' he asked, 'shall we not take it?' ('Yes.') 'Are you willing to take it?' ('Yes.') 'If I jump down among you will you follow me?' (The crowd answered, with loud acclamations, 'Yes! yes!') Watson, thus encouraged, seized on a tricoloured flag which had been placed in the wagon and jumped down. His father and his other associates attended him; and the mob, surging round him, followed him through Clerkenwell and Smithfield to Snow Hill. Here they seized all the firearms in a gunsmith's shop; shot at and severely wounded a gentleman who had the temerity to remonstrate with them; and continued their march through Cheapside to the Exchange. The Lord Mayor had had the prudence to collect a strong party of police at this point, and succeeded in arresting three of the most prominent rioters. The mob, foiled by the firm front which the Lord Mayor continued to oppose to them, filed off from the Exchange and moved into the Minories. Troops, however, were now gradually collecting from different parts of the metropolis. The rioters saw that it was impossible to accomplish anything further, and prudently began to disperse. Petty acts of mischief were committed by detached parties; but the tranquillity of the metropolis was secured before the close of the short December day which had witnessed the outbreak of the riot.[1]

[1] A full account of the Spa Fields riot will be found in *State Trials*, vol. xxxii. pp. 1–674. Castle's evidence —which is the most important portion

CHAP. V.

1816.

There was no doubt that a serious riot had occurred in the metropolis, or that its ringleaders thoroughly deserved punishment. Some time, however, elapsed before the more formidable among them were arrested; and it was not till the following June that they were placed on their trial. The ministry should have obviously indicted them for an aggravated riot; they had the folly to dignify their obscure proceedings by charging them with high treason. The jury declined to convict Watson, whose trial came on first, and the Attorney-General thereupon refused to proceed against the other prisoners. The folly of the ministry, in charging the culprits with an exaggerated offence, saved the prisoners from the punishment which they thoroughly deserved.[1]

While Watson and his associates had been rioting in the City, Hunt had at last arrived in Spa Fields. The meeting, which he addressed, resolved on a second adjournment, to 'the second Monday after the meeting of Parliament, viz., the 10th of February,' and in the meanwhile to organise the country by the formation of secret societies in every part of it. It was the object of these societies to obtain annual Parliaments, universal suffrage, vote by ballot, abolition of all property qualifications for members of Parliament, and paid representatives of the people in the House of Commons. These six objects were embodied in a charter, and gave the Radicals, who urged them, the name of Chartists.[2] Secret societies were

of the case—occupies from p. 214 to 329. See also *Ann. Reg.*, 1816, Chron., p. 190; *Hansard*, vol. xxxv. pp. 411–410.

[1] *Ann. Reg.*, 1817; Hist., 102, and Chron., 49. Romilly, vol. iii. p. 297.

[2] The most famous of these societies were the Spencean Clubs, the Hampden Clubs, and the Union Clubs. The Spenceans derived their name from one Spence, a Yorkshire schoolmaster, who desired to make all the land of the country the property of the State, and to divide all the produce for the support of the people. The Hampden Club in London was founded in 1811, by Mr. Northmore, a gentleman residing in Devonshire, for the purpose of promoting Parliamentary reform and the freedom of election. It had a very feeble existence, and died a natural death in 1819. The London Union was founded in 1812. Both the Hampden Clubs and the Union Clubs seem to have been very harmless organisations. The former in-

1816.

Secret societies.

formed in the neighbourhoods of 'Leicester, Loughborough, Nottingham, Mansfield, Derby, Chesterfield, Sheffield, Blackburn, Manchester, Birmingham, and Glasgow.'[1] 'But,' added the Secret Committee of 1817, 'they extend and are spreading in some parts of the country to every village.' The upper classes were seriously alarmed by the preparations which they saw around them. 'The lower orders,' wrote Nadin, the chief constable of Manchester, 'are everywhere meeting in large bodies, and are very clamorous.' 'A very wide and extensive plan of insurrection has been formed,' wrote the Duke of Northumberland, 'which might possibly have been acted upon before this time but for the proper precautions taken to prevent it.'[2]

Nadin and the Duke of Northumberland gave expression to the general sense of alarm which was everywhere felt. And the alarm, general as it was, was increased by a very unfortunate circumstance. The Regent, on his return from opening Parliament, was very grossly insulted. Stones were thrown at his carriage, and one of its windows was actually broken, either by a stone or, as was believed at the time, by a bullet from an air-gun. Nothing could have been more unfortunate for the country than this occurrence. The upper classes were already incensed against the Radicals; and the outrage on the Regent, exaggerated into an attack on his life, increased their resentment. Extreme measures were loudly called for; and discontent, which had been partly fomented by harsh and unequal legislation, was made the excuse for legis-

cluded among its members the Duke of Norfolk, Lord Byron, Lord Oxford, M. Ducane of Braxted, Mr. Fawkes of Farnley, Mr. Hodges of Hemsted, Mr. Rashleigh of Prideaux, and many other large landed proprietors. A good deal will be found about these clubs in the *Life of Major Cartwright*, the 'father of Reform,' a dull biography, which has probably had few readers. See especially vol. ii. pp. 24, 129, 163, 178, 184, 377, 388. Cf. also *Hansard*, vol. xxxv. pp. 443, 473, 531; *State Trials*, vol. xxxii. p. 32; and *Hist. of the Thirty Years' Peace*, vol. i. p. 50.

[1] *Ann. Reg.*, 1817, Hist., p. 6. *Hansard*, vol. xxxv. pp. 411–419. Alison's *Castlereagh*, vol. iii. p. 37.

[2] Sidmouth, vol. iii. pp. 165, 177.

CHAP. V.

1816.

General alarm.

lation still harsher and more unequal. It was at this moment that the Government might have usefully interfered and endeavoured to calm the public apprehensions. The leading members of the Opposition were in favour of a lenient policy, and would willingly have supported mild remedies. The distress which the country had endured formed some excuse for the excesses which had been witnessed; the glorious victories which she had achieved abroad might have induced her to disregard the foolish clamour of a few mischief-makers. The miller who resists the violence of a flood by closing his sluices may pen up the accumulated waters for a time, but they will ultimately overwhelm him. His neighbour, who opens his sluices and lets the flood pass on, will have the satisfaction of seeing the water ultimately subside. So too in the political world. The statesman who opposes himself to the demands of the people may achieve a temporary success, but the strength of numbers must always assert its power at last. Arbitrary government may succeed for a time, but it must ultimately be subverted by the power of the people.

Nor did the circumstances of the country in 1817 afford any excuse for arbitrary measures. General distress had been succeeded by general discontent; general discontent had produced a series of lamentable outrages. But the law as it stood had proved adequate to the repression of every tumult. The riots in Cambridgeshire had been quelled; the coal districts were settling into tranquillity; the outrages which had disgraced the metropolis had ended as suddenly as they had begun; the value of corn had reached its maximum; and there was reason to believe that prices were beginning to fall. Under such circumstances the ministry would have done wisely to have leaned to the side of leniency, and to have abstained from asking for fresh measures of repression, Unfortunately, Lord Liverpool, Lord Castlereagh, and

Lord Sidmouth abandoned themselves to a different policy. They saw in every attempt at riot fresh excuse for new penal laws; and, while they were smothering the flame with fresh fuel, fancied that they had extinguished it. Lord Castlereagh's biographer admits that Lord Castlereagh's extreme unpopularity commenced with this period.[1] The loathing which Lord Byron conceived for the system pursued by the ministry betrayed him into language which it is impossible to quote in a page intended for general reading.

CHAP. V. 1816. Policy of the ministry.

The first step which the ministry took was to refer to secret committees of both Houses of Parliament papers 'respecting certain practices, meetings, and combinations in the metropolis and different parts of the kingdom, evidently calculated to endanger the public tranquillity, to alienate the affections of his Majesty's subjects from his Majesty's person and government, and to bring into hatred and contempt the whole system of our laws and constitution.'[2] The committees in both Houses agreed on nearly identical reports. The purport of those reports has already been partly stated. A general insurrection, the subversion of the Government, a general plunder of property were, in the opinion of the Lords' committee, the immediate objects of the Reformers. Secret societies, it was added, with branches affiliated to them, were organising the country. Seditious and inflammatory publications were disseminated among the people. Arms were, in certain cases, provided by a few desperate men; and their possessors probably contemplated the possibility of riot and disorder. There was no doubt that the committees were satisfied as to the gravity of the situation. There is no reason to doubt their good faith; but it is legitimate to question their infallibility. Their infallibility is questionable on substantial grounds. It is certain that they described the objects

Secret committees.

[1] Alison's *Castlereagh*, vol. iii. p. 48. [2] *Hansard*, vol. xxxv. p. 173.

CHAP. V. 1817.

of the societies in very exaggerated language; and when men are convicted of using hyperbole in one case there is always *primâ facie* ground for thinking that they may be guilty of other exaggerations. The Lords' committee themselves defined their meaning when they spoke of the subversion of the constitution and the plunder of society. The subversion of the constitution which the secret societies were meditating was the enactment of universal suffrage and of annual Parliaments. The plunder of society which the secret societies were proposing was an alteration of the land laws on the lines which have since been laid down by Mr. Stuart Mill. These objects may have been very foolish and very impracticable, but they did not deserve the harsh language in which the committees of both Houses spoke of them. It is true that the committees added that these objects were to be attained by violence and insurrection. But, with the exception of the circumstances connected with the Spa Fields riot, neither committee placed its finger on a single definite act which proved their statement. The leaders of the Spa Fields riot were tried at the bar of the King's Bench for treason, and the jury refused to convict them. Their acquittal casts, to say the least, a doubt on the justice of the reports made by the secret committees of both Houses.[1]

Though, however, the riots of the preceding months had not been serious; though they had been quelled in every instance without great difficulty, vague apprehensions of the immediate future haunted men's minds. Southey, from his lonely retreat amongst the mountains of the Lake Country, wrote to assure Lord Liverpool that 'the manufacturing populace are not merely discontented with the Government, but absolutely abhor it with a deadly hatred.' The ministry were prepared to agree with the feelings of the Laureate. On the 21st of February

[1] *Hansard*, vol. xxxv. pp. 411, 438–447.

Repressive measures in Great Britain.

Lord Sidmouth introduced into the House of Lords a bill for the temporary suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act. On the 24th of February Lord Castlereagh, in the House of Commons, introduced three other bills; one to prevent seditious meetings and assemblies; another to perpetuate and to extend to the Regent an act for the safety and preservation of his Majesty's person; and a third 'for the better prevention and punishment of all attempts to seduce persons serving.' The ministry succeeded in carrying all these measures; but their proposal was met with a very formidable opposition in both Houses. The general alarm of the nation, however, frustrated the attempt which one section of the Opposition made to obtain milder remedies. Lord Grenville, who had been the head of the Talents administration, and who was, in one sense, the leader of the loose and disorganised Opposition, separated himself from his own friends and supported the Ministry. Mackintosh was unable to persuade the House to substitute transportation for death as the punishment for the refusal of a seditious meeting to disperse. The reports of the secret committees had done their work: the powers which the Government demanded were given them by large majorities, and their bills became law.[1]

No ministry since that of Lord Liverpool, no Parliament since that of 1817, has ventured to suspend the Habeas Corpus Act in Great Britain. A far more serious danger than the Spa Fields meeting has occurred since that time, a far more formidable organisation than that of the Radicals has been arrayed against the British Government. Yet the ministry of 1848 and the two ministries of 1866 faced the Chartist riots and overcame the Fenian insurrection without suspending the Habeas Corpus Act in Great Britain for a day. It is almost impossible to

[1] *Hansard*, vol. xxxv. pp. 491, 551, 639, 795, 822, 931–946. *Ann. Reg.*, 1817, Hist., pp. 23, 24.

CHAP. V. 1817.

justify the suspension of the Act in 1817. It is equally impossible to defend the law for the suppression of seditious meetings. What were the circumstances under which it was proposed? The organisers of the Radicals had had the dexterity to discover that, by adjourning a meeting legally convened, they could practically evade the law which required each meeting to be summoned on the requisition of seven householders, and thus keep up a continual agitation against the Government. It requires an effort to believe that these continually adjourned meetings constituted dangers which it was desirable to repress by exceptional legislation. But, even if adjourned meetings were dangerous, the Seditious Meetings Bill went far beyond the requirements to which it pointed. It was the deliberate object of the bill to prevent the existence of debating societies, lecture rooms, and reading rooms. The ministry even declined to exempt lectures in medicine, surgery, and chemistry from its operation. No debating society could sit, no lecture could be given, without the leave of the licensing magistrates. Some of the licensing magistrates, at any rate, were animated in administering the law by the narrowest views. One of the aldermen of London, in resisting the grant of a license to the Academical Society, declared that it was 'the purpose of the act to put down all political debate whatever.' A brother alderman concurred in this illiberal sentiment. But the most learned bodies were actuated by the same views. The Union—the well-known debating society at Cambridge—was arbitrarily suppressed by the Vice-Chancellor.[1] The mouth of the nation was gagged; and political discussion absolutely checked.

Repressive legislation was sanctioned at the time by the example of one great authority. Pitt, in the closing years of the eighteenth century, had been driven by the

[1] *Hansard*, vol. xxxvi. pp. 1, 18. *Ann. Reg.*, 1817, Chron., pp. 29, 33.

violence of the Jacobins to resort to arbitrary legislation of a similar character; and the halo which still surrounded Pitt's memory shed a reflected light on those who imitated his policy. Posterity has hardly approved Pitt's later policy with the unanimity with which it has praised his earlier administration. The mere fact that Pitt, at a particular juncture, took a certain course would not be regarded now, as it would have been fifty years ago, as proof of its wisdom. But Pitt's fame has suffered more from the servile imitation of his followers than from the criticisms of all his opponents. He has, in this way, been made indirectly responsible not merely for the acts of his own administration, but for the policy of his successors. Never was a greater injustice done to any minister. Pitt, during the close of his administration, stood at bay against Jacobinism. The Continent was in arms; Ireland was in insurrection; the principles of Jacobinism were permeating society; Paine was publishing his 'Rights of Man;' William Godwin denouncing the injustice of all law in 'Political Justice.' The war with France in 1793 was a war against Jacobinism; and statesmen, who conceived such a war necessary, were logically compelled to combat the foe, which was simultaneously struggling against them in the United Kingdom. But the last excuse for repressive legislation had been removed by the battle of Waterloo. The exceptional state of things, which the Revolution had created, had passed away; for good or for evil, Legitimism had been restored; and an exhausted Continent had sunk into a sullen acquiescence. Revolution was no longer a danger, because revolution had everywhere been stamped out; and the excuse for arbitrary government had been definitely removed by the restoration of order.

CHAP. V. 1817.

Nothing, then, but the very strongest necessity would have justified the legislation of 1817; and, though the state of society was critical, the crisis hardly warranted

In Ireland.

CHAP. V.

1817.

the severe legislation of that year. The course which the ministry pursued in Ireland affords the best ground for criticising the legislation which they applied to Great Britain. Ireland had suffered as severe distress as any part of the country. The Irish were emigrating in unusual numbers; and the emigrants were drawn from the most orderly section of the community. A fearful fever, probably occasioned by famine, was breaking out in various places; and outrages too horrible to particularise cast terror over the community.[1] During the three preceding years exceptional power had been given to the magistrates to deal with counties proclaimed or disturbed. The powers were arbitrary. They were far less universal and less arbitrary than a general suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act. Yet the Government were satisfied with the continuance of the powers which they already possessed without resorting to new measures. The Irish Insurrection Act was renewed; the Irish Government was empowered by the Peace Preservation Act to appoint superintendent magistrates and constables in disturbed districts, and to defray some portion of their cost out of the public funds. The measure, which thus became law, founded the Constabulary Force, which has probably done more to restore peace in Ireland than any other precaution. Its ultimate results have, therefore, proved highly beneficial; its immediate consequences were, moreover, gratifying.[2] The Irish Government found themselves able to reduce the military force in Ireland from 25,000 to 22,000 men, the artillery from 400 to 200 guns.[3]

Flight of Cobbett.

In Ireland, then, the Government refrained from suspending the Habeas Corpus Act. In England, where the distress was not greater, and the danger less serious,

[1] Colchester, vol. ii. p. 585. Liverpool, vol. ii. p. 279. *Ann. Reg.*, 1817, Chron., pp. 77, 80, 85, 125, 127.

[2] This was the force the men of which received the name of 'Peelers,' a name which has since been transferred to England. *Hansard*, vol. xxxvi. p. 970.

[3] *Hansard*, vol. xxxv. pp. 980–983. *Ann. Reg.*, 1817, Hist., p. 43.

they insisted on its suspension. The Act had no sooner been suspended than the more violent members of the Tory party insisted on its vigorous use. A few weeks before the riot in Spa Fields, Cobbett had converted his 'Register' into a twopenny paper; and even calm men conceived that the disorders of the country were due to the dissemination of Cobbett's inflammatory writings. 'I did hope,' wrote Southey to the Prime Minister, 'that the first measure after the suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act would have been to place the chief incendiary writer in safe custody. No means can be effectual for checking the intolerable license of the press but that of making transportation the punishment for its abuse.'[1] The disappointment which Southey thus expressed was, however, soon removed. The ministry dared not prosecute Cobbett; but Cobbett, on his part, dared not risk the chance of a second prosecution. Overburdened with debt, with a vivid recollection of his two years' imprisonment in his mind, he decided on withdrawing from the country and emigrating to America. The suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act had thus the effect of driving the most formidable political writer of the day into temporary banishment.

CHAP. V. 1817.

The withdrawal of Cobbett from the scene of his former achievements did not, however, allay the agitation which was troubling the country. Up to the close of 1816, indeed, there is every reason to believe that the agitation was only intended to promote the cause of a sweeping measure of reform. An agitation of this character, however, conducted by a secret organisation, was almost certain, sooner or later, to lead to the adoption of more dangerous measures. Some of the most reckless members of the Hampden Clubs or of the Spencean Societies were sure to declare that no means could be undesirable which were employed to promote

[1] Liverpool, vol. ii. p. 298.

CHAP. V. 1817.

ends which all agreed in desiring. Force or intimidation, the forerunner of force, became occasionally mentioned as possible expedients for promoting the reform of Parliament; and the members of the Scotch clubs actually bound themselves by an oath to further the objects of their organisation 'either by moral or physical strength, as the case may require.'[1] The extreme measures which the Government adopted for repressing the agitation had naturally the effect of increasing the violence of those who fancied that they were endangered by them. Fires, which it seemed possible to trace to incendiaries, broke out in agricultural districts. Riots, necessitating the interference of the military, occurred at intervals in various parts of the country. Manchester was the focus in which discontent was concentrated; and a great meeting was held in Manchester on the 3rd of March, to protest against the suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act. The meeting adopted the fashionable expedient of the Reformers of the day. It was adjourned to the following Monday. And it was agreed that ten out of every twenty persons who attended the adjourned meeting should proceed to London on foot with a petition to the Prince Regent. The petitioners were recommended to provide themselves with a blanket; and in consequence their march is known in history as the march of the 'Blanketeers.'

The Blanketeers.

There is no doubt that this march was organised with a different object from that which had animated the wretched colliers, who had dragged their loaded wagons through the country in the previous year. It was the object of the colliers to excite compassion; it was the object of the Blanketeers to cause alarm. They were assured by their leaders that they were a most formidable body; they were persuaded in a few instances to provide themselves

[1] See the Prosecutions of Edgar and McKinlay, in *State Trials*, vol. xxxiii. pp. 145-632. *Hansard*, vol. xxxv. p. 729.

with arms; they were told that similar deputations from the manufacturing towns of Yorkshire would meet them on the road; and that the military would be powerless to resist them. The meeting took place accordingly on the day named for it. Some 10,000 or 12,000 persons are supposed to have attended it;[1] and considerable numbers of them actually set out for London. Never did a serious demonstration more completely collapse. On the evening preceding the meeting four of the supposed leaders were arrested on warrants specially sent down by the Secretary of State. A few persons, who harangued a mob on the Sunday, were summarily conveyed by a party of dragoons to the Old Bailey. Sir John Byng, who commanded the forces in the district, assembled a few troops of yeomanry at Salemoor, in the immediate vicinity of Manchester, on the Monday morning. The petitioners, on their march through Stockport, were intercepted by a troop of Life Guards, and some forty of them were arrested and conveyed back to Manchester. Notwithstanding these disasters, 500 stragglers succeeded in penetrating to Macclesfield.[2] Not more than twenty crossed the borders of Staffordshire. Fainting with fatigue, without baggage, without food, these few wretched wanderers excited nothing but pity.[3]

Subsequent plans of the Radicals.

The demonstration had collapsed; and its collapse had not been due to the special legislation which the Government had thought necessary. On the 10th of March the Seditious Meetings Act had not passed. Yet the powers at the disposal of the authorities had proved amply sufficient to deal with every difficulty. In the eyes of the Government, however, the danger had not been averted; it had only been postponed. Lord Sidmouth was in constant communication with a man named Oliver, who supplied

[1] Bamford says 4,000 or 5,000. *Life of a Radical*, vol. i. p. 82.

[2] Bamford says 180.

[3] *Ann. Reg.*, 1817, Chron., pp. 19–22; and Hist., p. 67.

CHAP. V. 1817.

him with continuous reports of the progress of the insurrection. Oliver had, in the first instance, become accidentally acquainted with the designs of the conspirators; he had availed himself of the accident to keep himself informed of the objects of the conspiracy; and he had transmitted all that he learned, and possibly all that he believed, to Lord Sidmouth. Lord Sidmouth, later on, was violently attacked for listening to a spy. It was insinuated that Oliver was employed to foment the proceedings which he had made it his trade to discover. Charges of this character do not deserve much attention. The objects of a conspiracy can only be discovered by the revelations of some of the conspirators; and a minister who takes the high moral line of refusing to listen to a spy may lose the opportunity of averting a serious disaster. If, however, occasions may occur when a minister may legitimately listen to an informer, the evidence of every informer should always be received with considerable suspicion. An informer, from his very nature, must be treasonable to his own friends. The man who, from fear of punishment or love of gain, stoops to betray his friends may be tempted to go one step further and deceive his employers. A good deal of the information which we possess of the designs of the conspirators in 1817 rests on the evidence of men like Oliver. For this reason the account must be accepted with some hesitation.[1]

The demonstration of the 10th of March had ended in a conspicuous failure. But the leaders of the mob decided on another attempt. 'A general rising,' to use the expression of the secret committee of the House of Commons, 'a general insurrection,' to use the phrase employed by the Lords' committee, was arranged for the 30th of March. 2,000 or 3,000 men were to be assembled

[1] See (as to Oliver) numerous debates in the House of Lords and in the House of Commons. *Hansard*, vols. xxxvi. and xxxviii. Oliver, in fact, took up more Parliamentary time and received more attention, both in 1817 and in 1818, than almost any other subject.

in the dead of the night at Manchester; the magistrates were to be seized; the prisoners were to be liberated; the soldiers were to be surprised in their barracks; and the general discontent was to be increased by the burning of some of the factories which continued to afford employment to the workpeople.[1] Expectations were held out that risings would simultaneously take place in Lancaster, York, Warwick, Leicester, Nottingham, Chester, and Stafford. Two days, however, before the date fixed for the insurrection, warrants were issued by the Secretary of State, on the representation of the local magistracy, for the apprehension of the ringleaders. This simple precaution disconcerted the conspirators, and the rising was postponed. But a few delegates, as they called themselves, from some eight manufacturing towns, were still anxious to contrive 'some general plan of simultaneous and connected insurrection, to march upon London, to overturn the existing Government, and to establish a republic.' The 9th of June was fixed for this new demonstration. The arrest of some of the ringleaders on the 6th of June, at Huddersfield, again disconcerted the plans of the conspirators. The rising resulted in a riot at Huddersfield, and a rather more serious riot in the Midland Counties. 'The mass of the population through which the insurgents passed evinced,' so the House of Commons' committee admitted, 'the utmost abhorrence of their designs and projects.'[2]

Revival of the secret committees.

The progress of the insurrection suggested new precautions to the Government. At the commencement of June the Regent communicated fresh information to both Houses of Parliament; and, on the motion of the ministers, the secret committees of February were revived for

[1] Bamford heard of this through a friend. The friend had been told by a stranger that they were going to make a Moscow of Manchester. Bamford told the fellow he would have nothing to do with it, and evidently regarded the stranger as a fool or a spy. Vol. i. p. 37.

[2] *Annual Register*, 1817, Hist., p. 81.

CHAP. V. 1817.

the purpose of considering the information thus obtained. Both committees agreed that these papers afforded 'but too many proofs of the continued existence of a traitorous conspiracy for the overthrow of our established Government and Constitution, and for the subversion of the existing order of society.' Both of them expressed 'their conviction that it is not yet safe to rely entirely, for the preservation of the public tranquillity, upon the ordinary powers of the law.'[1] Both of them, therefore, pointed to the continued suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act. The Act had only been suspended, in the first instance, till the close of the session; and fresh legislation was, therefore, necessary, if its suspension were to be renewed. A section of the Opposition, in both Houses, actively resisted the Government. They denied, in the first place, the necessity for any extraordinary powers whatever; they endeavoured, in the next place, to limit their duration; and they desired, in the third place, to except Scotland from the operation of the bill. But the terror which animated the country paralysed their efforts. Lord Grenville and all his following supported the ministry. The abortive risings at Manchester, Huddersfield, and Derby, occurring at the very moment at which the secret committees were deliberating, strengthened the hands of the administration. The Habeas Corpus Act was suspended till the 1st of March, 1818.[2] Since that date the Habeas Corpus Act has never been suspended in Great Britain.

Abortive prosecutions.

The ministry had been singularly successful in forcing their repressive measures through Parliament; but they did not enjoy a similar success in punishing the persons whom they had succeeded in apprehending. They could only

[1] *Ann. Reg.*, 1817, Hist., pp. 65, 81. *Hansard*, vol. xxxvi. pp. 949, 1089.

[2] Ibid., pp. 975–1017, 1044–1063, 1109–1155, 1198–1254. *Ann. Reg.*, 1817, Hist., p. 83. Romilly, vol. iii. p. 305.

justify their conduct in Parliament by indicting the rioters for high treason; and the evidence of treason rested on the testimony of informers, who were not likely to gain credence from juries. The grand jury of Middlesex, indeed, found a true bill against Watson, Thistlewood, and the other leaders of the Spa Fields riots. But the common jury declined to convict Watson; and after his acquittal the Attorney-General abstained from proceeding against the other prisoners. A formidable riot, meriting severe punishment, had been left unpunished, from the folly of the ministry in dignifying some obscure men by charging them with high treason. A similar failure awaited the ministry in York. Twenty-four persons arrested on the eve of the riot at Huddersfield were charged with high treason. The ability and the wealth at the disposal of the Government were freely applied for the purposes of ensuring their conviction. 'A large portion of the weight and talent of the Bar on the Northern circuit was ranged on the side of the prosecution; and, that nothing might be wanting to give importance to these proceedings, Mr. Gurney was sent down from London at the expense of the Government to take reports of the trials. Against all this weight of power and influence, seconded by the public purse, a few obscure men and boys, principally in the very lowest ranks in society, had to defend themselves. The odds were terrific.' But the obscure men and boys defeated all the efforts of the ministry and their professional assistants. No bills were found against eleven of the prisoners; ten were pronounced not guilty; one was liberated on bail; and the remaining two were detained in prison without trial, by a Secretary of State's warrant, under the authority of the Habeas Corpus Suspension Act.[1] The trials at York and the trials in London formed a strange commentary on the arbitrary proceedings which ministers had adopted.

[1] *Ann. Reg.*, 1817, Chron., p. 72.

CHAP. V.

1817.

Trial of the Derby rioters

These successive failures induced the ministry to redouble their exertions against the rioters of Derby. Brandreth, the leader of the unfortunate riot which had broken out on the 9th of June, was a very extraordinary personage. He was popularly known as the 'Nottinghamshire Captain,' and he seems to have possessed many of the qualities which fit men for leading their fellow-creatures. Utterly uneducated, a pauper in receipt of parish relief, his 'great courage,' his 'uncommon decision,' his 'unrelenting firmness,' gave him 'that sort of instinctive influence which even in his humble station there is no resisting.' He had 'an eye,' said his counsel, 'like no eye that I ever beheld before, a countenance and a figure formed for active enterprise and command.' During the course of the trial Byron's magnificent description of the Corsair was applied to him:—

> With these he mingles not but to command;
> Few are his words, but keen his eye and hand;
>
> . . . . . .
>
> Whose name appals the fiercest of his crew,
> And tints each swarthy cheek with sallower hue:
> Still sways their souls with that commanding art
> That dazzles, leads, yet chills the vulgar heart.
> What is that spell that thus his lawless train
> Confess and envy, yet oppose in vain?
> What should it be that thus their faith can bind?
> The power of Thought—the magic of the Mind!

'I need not care whether I live or die,' were Brandreth's words in prison, 'for there are no Derbyshire ribs now.'[1] A change of fashion, which had deprived him of his humble livelihood, had, in other words, made Brandreth utterly reckless. His acts were indisputably criminal. On the evening of Monday, the 9th of June, he assembled some 500 men, to whom he had previously communicated the

[1] 'Derbyshire ribs' were, of course, the ribbed hosiery which was made in Derbyshire. An interesting account of the introduction of ribbed hosiery will be found in Baines' *History of the Cotton Manufacture.*

outline of his plans, and addressed them in some rugged doggrel:— CHAP. V. 1817.

> Every man his skill must try:
> He must turn out and not deny;
> No bloody soldier must he dread,
> He must turn out and fight for bread.
> The time is come, you plainly see,
> The Government oppos'd must be.[1]

Arms were obtained by threats and violence from several householders too terrified to resist the rioters. A man, who ventured to oppose them, was shot dead by Brandreth himself.[2] This act of violence increased the terror with which the rioters were already regarded. Arms were everywhere given to them; and the men, thus strengthened, marched through the night towards Nottingham. News of the disturbance had, in the meanwhile, reached the authorities. The Yeomanry assembled; and the rioters, when morning dawned, 'saw themselves confronted with a force which made resistance hopeless. They dispersed rapidly, without risking an encounter, strewing the ground with the weapons which they had so lawlessly obtained.'

There was no doubt whatever that Brandreth and his associates had committed a very serious crime. Brandreth had been guilty of a cold-blooded murder, and deserved to suffer the extreme penalty which the law has always permitted to be inflicted on offenders of this character. The Government, however, instead of indicting Brandreth and his associates for murder, charged them 'with levying war against the king.' The presiding judge told the jury that 'armed insurrection for the purpose of effecting a change of government amounted in construction of law to a levying war against the king.' The jury found Brandreth and two of his principal associates, Ludlam and Turner, guilty of high treason; and the three

[1] *State Trials*, vol. xxxii. p. 804. [2] Ibid., p. 790.

CHAP. V. 1817.

wretched men shortly afterwards forfeited their lives for the grave offence which they had committed against their country.[1]

Return of prosperity and subsidence of disturbance.

The execution of Brandreth and his associates marked the conclusion of the so-called insurrection which had commenced with the riot in Spa Fields. The cause to which the disturbances had really been due was gradually disappearing; and with the disappearance of the cause the disturbance itself subsided. During the first seven months of 1817 wheat was never quoted at a lower price than 5*l.* a quarter; but, as the summer wore on, hot weather and the appearance of a better harvest led to a rapid fall of prices. Wheat fell in August to an average of 86*s.* 2*d.*, and through the rest of the year its price stood at about 4*l.* a quarter. 'In Devonshire every article of life is falling,' wrote Lord Exmouth to Lord Sidmouth in the middle of September; 'the panic among the farmers wearing off; and, above all, that hitherto marketable article, discontent, is everywhere disappearing.'[2] Consols, which stood at 62 in January, rose to 81 in August. During the whole of 1816, and during the first half of 1817, there had on an average been 170 bankruptcies a month in England alone. During the last six months of 1817 there were only 555 bankruptcies, or about 92 a month. The trade of the country was at the same time steadily improving. 'Trade of every kind is recovering, and not a loom is idle in Glasgow,' wrote Scott to the Duke of Buccleuch.[3] The official value of the imports rose from 26,374,921*l.* in 1816 to 29,910,502*l.* in 1817; the official value of the exports of home produce from 34,774,521*l.* to 39,233,467*l.*[4] Everything, therefore, tended to show that trade was im-

[1] Brandreth's trial will be found in *State Trials*, vol. xxxii. p. 755; Turner's on page 957; Ludlam's on page 1135.

[2] Sidmouth, vol. iii. p. 198.

[3] Lockhart's *Scott*, p. 355.

[4] *Ann. Reg.*, 1817, Hist., pp. 238, 239, 240. McCulloch's *Commerc. Dictionary*, ad verb. Imports and Exports.

proving, and with the restoration of prosperity confidence returned. Brandreth might have lived to die a natural death if the demand for Derbyshire ribs had been maintained; and thousands of Brandreths, in every part of the country, were prepared to continue quietly at work, if work were only forthcoming for them. A good harvest and a brisker trade had concluded the disturbance which a bad harvest and a dull trade had been mainly instrumental in fomenting.

Measures of retrenchment.

During the continuance of the session, however, the symptoms of the coming change were hardly visible. The appearance of the country was gloomy in the extreme; and the year was not sufficiently advanced to justify any reliance on the coming harvest. A failing revenue and an impoverished people suggested the propriety of economy; and the Regent had consequently been advised, in the speech in which he opened Parliament, to commend 'the state of the public income and expenditure' to the 'early and serious attention' of the House of Commons. The session was hardly a week old before Lord Castlereagh, as the leader of the Government, explained the steps which the ministry were prepared to take to carry out the Regent's advice. Large reductions of expenditure were freely promised in every branch of the public service. But the ministry did not rely on these reductions alone. The entire expenditure of the state was referred to a select committee, with power 'to consider what further measures may be adopted for the relief of the country without detriment to the public interest.' In the meanwhile Lord Castlereagh announced that the Regent resigned to the public one-fifth of his whole receipts, or 50,000*l.* a year; and that 'the public servants of the Crown were also anxious to offer their assistance, by contributing what the property-tax, had it been continued, would have taken from them.'[1]

Appointment of Finance Committee.

[1] *Hansard*, vol. xxxv. pp. 252, 307; *Ann. Reg.*, 1819, Hist., p. 39.

CHAP. V. 1817.

These proposals were generous; but the feeling of the House was so strong that the ministry were blamed by their opponents for their want of generosity. Ponsonby, the leader of the Opposition, who was in the enjoyment of a considerable pension, offered 'to give up in the same proportion as the Regent;' in other words, to surrender one-fifth instead of one-tenth of his pension. The Opposition, with some show of reason, endeavoured to exclude placemen from a committee which was intended to propose the reduction of superfluous places. The ministers succeeded in resisting the attempt; but the temper which animated the House was unmistakable. The committee met; and its attention was, at once, directed to the numerous sinecure offices, which existed in almost every department of the Government. There were the Chief Justices in Eyre, north and south of the Trent, with no duties to perform, and 4,000*l.* a year for performing them. There was the clerk of the Pells, with 3,000*l.* a year; and the four tellers of the Exchequer, with 2,700*l.* each. There was the Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports, with 3,000*l.* a year, and the Governor of the Isle of Wight, with 600*l.*; there was the office of clerk of the Parliaments, worth 5,000*l.* a year to the gentleman who was so fortunate as to possess it.[1] There were the four clerks of the Signet, and the four clerks of the Privy Seal. The sinecures in Scotland and Ireland were in comparison even more numerous and more costly than those in England. The committee saw 'no reason to doubt that the annual income now derived from the offices which are thus brought under the observation of the House, as being at the disposal of the Crown, and fit to be abolished or regulated, may be estimated at from 90,000*l.* to 100,000*l.*'[2] The committee did not include in their re-

[1] *Ann. Reg.*, 1817, Chron., p. 306. Colchester, vol. ii. p. 602, where the salary of the Lord Warden is given as 5,000*l.* instead of 3,000*l.* a year.

[2] *Ann. Reg.*, 1817, Chron., pp. 308-315.

port some offices which, since that day, have been swept away with advantage to the public.

Reduction of sinecures.

The report of the committee of 1817, and the excitement which universal distress had produced, compelled the Government to take some steps to reduce the number of sinecures. In previous years they had successfully resisted any proposals of this character. But, from 1817 to the present time, useless and superfluous offices have been gradually diminished in number. Six acts were passed with this object in the session of 1817 alone. The first dealt with certain offices in the Court of Exchequer; the second with the Chief Justices in Eyre, north and south of the Trent; the third with certain offices in Ireland; the fourth with the clerks of the Signet and of the Privy Seal; and the fifth with some Scotch offices. The sixth enabled the king to reward high political service with adequate pensions. A certain number of persons, who had served in the highest offices of the state, and who had occupied such positions for a definite period, were to be entitled to pensions on their retirement from the public service. The gross amount of all the pensions which the sovereign was thus authorised to grant was not, however, to exceed one-half the sum which the offices which were abolished had cost. On purely economical grounds, therefore, the change which was thus made was advantageous. But the economy, which was the direct result of the change, formed only a portion of its merit.[1] All patronage is liable to abuse. But the patronage which is the most easily abused is that which deals with offices requiring no peculiar qualification and involving no special duties. A minister is apt to regard the calls of friendship or the claims of party as far more pressing than the reward of public merit; and the man who has devoted his abilities to the service of the state has the mortification of being superseded by some gentleman

[1] *Ann. Reg.*, 1817, Chron., p. 318.

CHAP. V. 1817.

who has perhaps spent a thousand pounds in unsuccessfully contesting some insignificant borough. Abuses of this character were much greater when sinecures were in existence than they are now. A man must have some qualifications for the post to be appointed to an office with definite duties attached to it. A man need have no qualifications for a situation which involves no cares but the punctual receipt of a considerable salary.

Report on the revenue.

The first report of the committee of 1817 dealt exclusively with sinecures; the second was devoted to a consideration of the military and naval establishments; the third and most important dealt with the entire revenue and expenditure of the state. This report was not presented till the first week in June; the Budget was postponed till after its presentation, and was ultimately founded on the figures contained in it. These figures showed, in a very remarkable way, the severity of the crisis through which the country had just passed. Up to the close of 1815 the revenue of Great Britain had been regularly and constantly increasing. The receipts from the most important branches, the customs, the excise, the stamps, and the Post-office, had risen from 42,293,083*l.* in 1812, to 45,277,579*l.* in 1815; they fell to 41,302,959*l.* in 1816. The committee considered that, including the Irish revenue and other sources of taxation, they might fairly rely on a revenue of 51,905,364*l.* during the year 1817. The sale of old stores was estimated to produce an additional 400,000*l.*, and thus raise the ways and means to 52,405,364*l.* The expenditure of the state, which amounted to 68,064,260*l.*, was far more than this sum,[1] and exceeded the estimated revenue by at least

[1] The expenditure was as follows:—

	£
Interest of Funded Debt	29,403,464
Sinking Fund of ditto	14,134,443
Civil List and other charges on Consolidated Fund . .	2,402,545
	£45,940,452

CHAP. V.

1817. The Sinking Fund.

15,850,000*l.* The situation, however, was hardly so bad as this short statement of it seemed to indicate. The deficit was really due to the Sinking Fund; and, if the Sinking Fund had been suspended, the deficit could have been immediately converted into a surplus. In the expenditure of 68,250,000*l.* no less than 16,124,443*l.* was devoted to the payment of debt.[1] The temporary suspension of the Sinking Fund would at once have terminated the embarrassing situation.

It would, however, have required a much stronger mind than Vansittart's to have seen the wisdom of this obvious arrangement. Vansittart clung to the Sinking Fund with a tenacity which was worthy of a better cause, and amused himself for years with effecting large reductions of the debt on paper. He provided for the deficit of the year in various ways: a lottery supplied him with 250,000*l.*; a surplus in the ways and means for 1815 and 1816 afforded him 1,865,000*l.*; and the arrears of the property tax which were still unpaid were relied on for 1,500,000*l.* More than three millions and a half of the deficit was thus provided for. For the residue Vansittart relied on Irish Treasury bills amounting to 3,600,000*l.*, and on

	£
Brought forward	45,940,452
Exchequer Bills interest	1,900,000
„ „ Sinking Fund	330,000
Army	9,080,000
Navy	5,986,000
Navy and Transport debt	1,660,000
Ordnance	1,221,300
Miscellaneous	1,700,000
Total	£67,817,752
Add, to make good the permanent charges for Ireland from previous year.	246,508
	£68,064,260

—*Hansard*, vol. xxxvi., appendix, p. cii.

[1] Sinking Fund:

	£
Sinking Fund	14,134,443
Exchequer Bills	330,000
Navy, &c., debt	1,660,000
Total	£16,124,443

CHAP. V. 1817.

9,000,000*l.* of Exchequer bills.[1] The minister, in short, proposed to borrow 12,600,000*l.* with one hand and to pay 16,000,000*l.* of debt with the other. Lord Liverpool, Lord Castlereagh, Vansittart, and all their colleagues seem to have been incapable of perceiving that the simpler, wiser, and more economical course would have been to have satisfied themselves with applying only the difference between these two sums to the reduction of debt.

The distress which characterised the year led to two other financial measures, widely different in their objects from those which have thus been mentioned, and differing also in their effects. The poverty of the country was so universal, and the burden thrown on the poor rates was so excessive, that the ministry felt itself compelled to afford some aid to the local authorities. The prudence of relieving local distress out of the public purse will probably always be disputed; but if it can ever be desirable for the central authority to assist the local guardians of the poor, it was eminently advisable that they should do so in 1817. The distress at that time was not confined to particular districts, it was universal throughout the kingdom. A sudden and unprecedented fall in the rent of land was diminishing the rates on which the local authorities were solely dependent. The labouring classes, from a variety of causes, fancied that they were oppressed by the administration. It was evidently proper that the legislature should take some steps to show its sympathy with their cause. On the 28th of April the House of Commons authorised the Government to issue half a million of Exchequer bills in Great Britain, and a quarter of a million in Ireland, for the completion of public works in progress or to be commenced, for the encouragement of the fisheries, and for the employment of the poor. The money thus voted was

Grants for local works.

[1] See Report of Select Committee, *Hansard*, vol. xxxvi.; appendix, p. lxxxi. Some of the figures were slightly altered in the Budget, *vide* pp. 1098–1109, and *Ann. Reg.*, 1817, Hist., pp. 84–91. Cf. also Public Inc. and Exp., Sess. 1869, No. 366.

to be advanced, on fair security, to different persons, and arrangements were to be made for the repayment of the principal in small instalments.[1]

Institution of savings banks.

The expenditure of three-quarters of a million on the employment of the labouring poor could not practically have had any very great effect on the condition of the country. But another step, which Parliament took at the same time, produced much more beneficial consequences. The first breath of adversity had thrown the kingdom into universal poverty; and a poverty so universal and so sudden could only have arisen in a state of society where the masses of the population were in the habit of taking no thought for the future. The Poor Law had, in fact, deprived the poor of every motive to save and of all means of saving. The poorhouse afforded the labourer a miserable but certain retirement in his old age. The universal distribution of paltry doles in the shape of out-door relief reconciled the labouring poor to a state of dependence. There was no shame in pauperism when every workman, at one time or another, was a pauper. There was no need for saving when the thrifty and the careless poor were equally certain of ending their days in the same common refuge, the parish poorhouse. In 1817 Parliament took one step towards encouraging thrift: it afforded the working poor the means of saving by establishing savings banks. There is a good deal in the constitution of these banks which is open to criticism. Since the establishment of the Post Office savings banks the old savings banks, in the opinion of some authorities, have survived their mission. But, in 1817, no one had foreseen the career of usefulness which the Post Office had before it. The old savings banks, then instituted for the first time, afforded the more industrious poor some prospect of escaping from the utter helplessness of their position. Their establishment relieves

[1] *Hansard*, vol. xxxvi. p. 27. *Ann. Reg.*, 1817, Hist., p. 45.

CHAP. V.

1817.

Abortive prosecutions of public writers.

the almost universal gloom which shrouds the Parliamentary proceedings of 1817.[1]

The institution of savings banks was the one solitary advantage which resulted from the distress of 1817. Their institution redeems the character of the otherwise harsh legislation which was passed during the year. Harsh, however, as were the proceedings of the ministry, compliant as the legislature proved, the country never tolerated the exceptional laws which Parliament and Government thought necessary. Juries acquitted men at York and London who thoroughly deserved the severest punishment, because the ministry insisted on terming every riot a rebellion, and in contending that discontent was synonymous with high treason. The ministry were equally unfortunate in persuading the country to adopt their views in another respect. A host of voluntary advisers was ready to ascribe all the evils and miseries of the time to the freedom of the press. The press, in Lord Sidmouth's judgment, was a most malignant and formidable enemy to the constitution to which it owed its freedom.[2] The press was supposed to be destroying the constitution, and the first duty of the Government was to muzzle the press. The fears which were expressed by such men as Southey were almost universal in the upper classes. 'Seriously,' wrote Wilberforce in 1819, 'the newspapers are among the very greatest, if not the greatest, evils of the country.'[3] Such an opinion from such a man as Wilberforce deserves attention; but it

[1] Savings banks had been advocated by Malthus, in his *Essay on Population*, and by Whitbread in 1807. In 1798 a bank for the savings of poor children was established at Tottenham, and it was extended to servants, labourers, and others in 1804. Savings banks were instituted at Bath in 1808, and at Ruthwell in 1810. 'The first London savings bank did not commence its operations till January 1816.' 'Savings banks are rapidly spreading through Scotland,' stated the *Edinburgh Review* in June 1815. Cobbett, singularly enough, denounced the scheme as 'a bubble' (*Register*, Jan. 4, 1817). *History of Thirty Years' Peace*, vol. i. p. 79. Alison, vol. i. p. 332. *Hansard*, vol. xxxiv. pp. 222–226.

[2] Sidmouth, vol. iii. p. 283.

[3] Wilberforce, vol. v. p. 48.

ought, at the same time, to occasion no surprise. The newspapers which circulated among the lower orders were ribald, scurrilous, and profane. 'I got the nineteen Sunday newspapers once for all the other day,' wrote Wilberforce in 1820, 'and assuredly such a collection of ribaldry and profaneness never before disgraced my library, and I trust never will again.'[1] The newspapers, however, were not singular in their ribaldry and profaneness. Blasphemous parodies of the Liturgy, libellous broadsheets on the ministry, were issued from obscure printing presses and circulated among the lower orders; writers, whose license formed their only claim to notoriety, were busily attempting to throw contempt on the faith and the institutions which were held in veneration by the respectable portions of the community.

Publications of this character will probably always disgrace the civilisation of the world. The most careful sanitary administration fails to remove every nuisance from the best-governed city; and the most paternal of governments will be powerless to supervise every broadsheet which is struck off by every obscure printer. It requires no great detective skill to discover the existence of vicious habits in any community; but it has been generally concluded that the needless exposure of vice is almost as great an evil as its existence. Sensible people shrink from publishing in the market-place the scenes which are daily acted in the byeways of every great city; and the vicious, so long as they abstain from parading their vices, are tolerated by society. The same rule is probably applicable to immoral publications. An obscene book may be seized by a police officer and destroyed under a magistrate's orders, just as putrid meat may be seized and destroyed by the duly constituted authorities. The foul food for the body and the foul food for the mind are treated in the same way, and condemned to a

[1] Wilberforce, vol. v. p. 66.

CHAP. V. 1817.

destruction which limits their notoriety and annihilates the profits of their worthless purveyors. It is otherwise when the Government attempts to prosecute the authors or printers of blasphemous, seditious, or libellous publications. If the publications themselves be distinguished for ability, the ability of the writers fascinates their judges, and is held as their excuse. If they have no distinction but the blasphemy or ribaldry of their language, a state prosecution imparts to them the publicity which they could not otherwise have gained; and broadsheets which would have had a short and dishonourable circulation in the byeways and alleys of the city are suddenly introduced to a fame which their own merits could never have acquired for them. The best patronage which can be afforded to any writer is the gratuitous advertisement of his writings; and the Government which honours the scurrilous with a public prosecution offers the maximum of encouragement to their works.

Unhappily, however, both for the country and for themselves, Lord Liverpool's Government thought otherwise. It was impressed with the ribaldry of the publications which were being hawked through the community; it was convinced that the best interests of the nation demanded their suppression; and it never paused to reflect on the consequences which would evidently follow from the publicity inseparable from state prosecutions. In the course of March, 1817, Lord Sidmouth, as Home Secretary, addressed a circular letter to the various Lords Lieutenant impressing on them the importance of preventing 'as far as possible the circulation of blasphemous and seditious pamphlets and writings, of which, for a considerable time past, great numbers have been sold and distributed throughout the country. The law officers,' Lord Sidmouth added, 'had notified their opinion, that a justice of the peace may issue a warrant to apprehend a person charged before him upon oath

with the publication of libels' of this nature. Under these circumstances Lord Sidmouth requested the Lieutenants of Counties to make known to the Chairman of each quarter sessions 'the substance of this communication, in order that he may recommend to the several magistrates to act thereupon in all cases where any person shall be found offending against the law.'[1]

Lord Sidmouth's circular letter attracted great attention in both Houses of Parliament. The law officers' law, on which it was founded, was questioned by high authorities; and the impropriety of a Secretary of State taking upon himself to interpret and enjoin the execution of the law was loudly questioned.[2] The ministry's position, however, in both Houses of Parliament was so strong that large majorities supported Lord Sidmouth's policy; and the cabinet, probably encouraged by the support which they received, determined on proceeding against the authors of some of the most ribald publications. The ministry had not yet learned from a long and painful experience that the feelings of the ordinary British juryman were opposed to needless prosecutions of obscure persons. A long series of failures had not yet convinced them of their unpopularity or induced them to pause in their headlong career. In the eyes of Lord Liverpool and his colleagues the printing press was the galvanic battery which infused life into the proceedings of the disaffected; and the summary arrest of every rioter was nothing if a single newspaper were allowed to scatter broadcast the seeds of sedition. An obscure paper, the 'Black Dwarf,' was the first object of their attack. The 'Black Dwarf' had published on the 2nd of April a scurrilous article against the ministry. It had declared that ministers had 'talked of patriotism when they meant plunder,' and that they had embarked on a war with 'France, not to conquer that

[1] *Ann. Reg.*, 1817, Hist., p. 60.
[2] *Hansard*, vol. xxxvi. pp. 445–516, 1158–1187.

CHAP. V.

1817.

Wooler.

country, but ourselves.' Scurrilous nonsense of this description should have been passed over in silence and with contempt. The ministry had the folly to honour one Wooler, the printer and publisher of the paper, with a State prosecution. Nothing could have been more favourable for Wooler's interests. His miserable libel, solemnly read in court, was, of course, immediately published in every part of the country. A scurrilous article, which could never have otherwise obtained a thousand readers, was read by millions; and Wooler, who undertook his own defence, had the satisfaction of being loudly cheered, and of finding that the officers of the court were unable to suppress the applause. The 'Black Dwarf' had been made a hero. 'In the "Black Dwarf" we have got a giant in talent on our side,' wrote old Major Cartwright.[1] These results would have been sufficiently serious if the ministry had succeeded in the prosecution. They had not even the solitary consolation of achieving success. The foreman of the jury, indeed, returned a verdict of 'guilty;' and the judge was proceeding to act upon it, when it transpired that the finding was not the finding of the entire jury. The judge could not, of course, accept a verdict which was not unanimous; and Wooler, like Watson and the Huddersfield rioters, had the credit of achieving a victory over the Government.[2]

Wooler's trial had taken place in June. The country was still in a state of ferment. The insurrection, which had resulted in Brandreth's rising, was supposed to be on the eve of occurring; and the ministry might have been pardoned for being carried away by the terrors which they professed to feel. As the year wore on, however, every symptom of danger gradually subsided; confidence returned; the persons arrested under the Habeas Corpus

[1] *Life of Cartwright*, vol. ii. p. 165.

[2] *Ann. Reg.*, 1817, Chron., p. 165. Wooler was subsequently concerned in the election of Sir Charles Wolseley as Legislatorial Attorney for Birmingham, and imprisoned. *Vide infra*, p. 506, and *Ann. Reg.*, 1820, Chron., p. 961.

Suspension Act were released; and the last excuse for exceptional measures was removed by the suppression of all panic. Neither, however, the failure which they had incurred in prosecuting Wooler, Watson, and the Huddersfield rioters nor the return of confidence deterred the ministry from persevering in the extraordinary course which they were bent on pursuing. In the middle of December 1817 they proceeded against a small publisher, William Hone, for a profane book which he had published and sold.[1] Hone had parodied some of the most solemn services of the Church of England—the Litany, the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the Church Catechism. The parody of the Creed was called the 'Sinecurist's Creed;' the parody of the Litany, the 'Political Litany;' and these titles will perhaps convey the purport of the parodies without polluting the pages of history with their offensive and profane language. Every right-thinking person must feel contempt for a writer who deliberately tries to cast ridicule on the words of services which, whether he believe them or not, he knows are regarded with extraordinary veneration by the great mass of his fellow-countrymen. Such a writer deserves to be scouted by every honest man and reprobated by every decent person. The last course, however, to take with such a writer is to give currency to his works by honouring him with a prosecution. Yet this was the course which was deliberately taken by Lord Liverpool's ministry. On the 18th of December the Attorney-General prosecuted Hone for his seditious and profane libels on those parts of our Church Service called the Catechism, the Apostles' Creed, and the

Trial of Hone.

[1] Hone, a bookseller, living in a little shop in the Old Bailey, was a very remarkable man. He was possessed of various and extensive information; and some of his publications—his 'Every Day Book,' for example—were very useful. He was described as 'a middle-aged man—a bland and smiling man—with a half-sad, half-merry twinkle in his eye—a "seedy man," to use an expressive word, whose black coat is wondrous brown and threadbare.'—*Hist. of the Thirty Years' Peace*, vol. i. p. 145.

CHAP. V. 1817.

Lord's Prayer. Mr. Justice Abbott before whom the case was tried, told the jury that the production was 'highly scandalous and irreligious, and therefore libellous.' But, notwithstanding this direction, the jury, after only a quarter of an hour's consideration, returned a verdict of not guilty; and their finding was received with applause in every part of the court.[1]

The verdict of the jury, in direct opposition to the charge of the judge, ought to have convinced the ministry and its advisers of the folly of the prosecutions which they were pressing. On the very day after Hone's acquittal on one charge they insisted on trying him on another, before Lord Ellenborough and a special jury. In the previous trial they had charged him with his parodies on the Catechism, the Creed, and the Lord's Prayer. On the second they charged him with libel for his parody on the Litany. The Attorney-General pressed on the jury the enormity of Hone's offence, and attempted to add force to his arguments by quoting passages from the parody. But his object was defeated by the 'indecorous laughter' which immediately rose in the court. The Attorney-General, disconcerted, declared that if the parody were not a libel 'there was no insult of the kind that might not be offered to the established religion and to the sacred writings with impunity.' Lord Ellenborough, with very doubtful propriety, pronounced the publication to be a most impious and profane libel; but the jury, in less than two hours, returned a verdict of not guilty. Hone had now been acquitted on two of the three charges preferred against him. With incredible folly the ministry, instead of withdrawing the remaining charge, persisted on the succeeding day in prosecuting him for his parody on the Athanasian Creed. The 'Sinecurist's Creed,' one of the counsel for the crown declared, was 'of the worst class of productions.' But the jury thought otherwise.

[1] *Ann. Reg.*, 1817, Chron., p. 161.

After an absence of half an hour they returned a verdict of not guilty. 'The moment the words were pronounced a spontaneous burst of applause issued from the crowd in the court, which soon extended to the crowd outside; and for some minutes the halls and adjoining avenues rang with shouts and acclamations. Some days afterwards a liberal subscription was entered into for Mr. Hone and his family.' The folly of the ministry had made a hero of a profane parodist, whose productions, but for the persecution of the Government, would have been regarded with contempt by every member of society.[1]

Hone's trials had one effect which the ministry probably had not foreseen. The first of the three trials had been before Mr. Justice Abbott; the two last before Lord Ellenborough, the Chief Justice of England. It was probably hoped that Lord Ellenborough's high authority would influence the jury, and that with his assistance a conviction would be secured. But it became painfully evident, during the progress of the trials, that Lord Ellenborough had no longer either the health or the temper to qualify him for his office. He suffered himself to become involved in a dispute with the prisoner about the admissibility of evidence; and, after dogmatically laying down the law, was obliged to give way. The mortification which he suffered at the result of the trials made him resolve on resigning; and, though his resignation was delayed for a time, he retired in the following autumn. There was much to condemn in Lord Ellenborough's career, yet it was difficult to supply his place. Sir Vicary Gibbs, the Chief Justice of the Common Pleas, was a sound lawyer. But he had been distinguished for a virulent persecution of the press as Attorney-General; he was a disagreeable and unpopular

[1] *Ann. Reg.*, 1817, Chron., p. 175. Hone's other productions are full of information, and deserve anything but contempt.

CHAP. V. 1817.

judge; and he was in weak health. Shepherd, the Attorney-General, was deaf, and therefore physically incapacitated for the post.[1] Gifford, the solicitor, was a young man, and anxious to remain for a further period at the Bar. Under these circumstances the ministry decided on promoting Abbott, one of the Puisne Judges of the King's Bench. Charles Abbott was one of the four distinguished men, Arkwright, Turner, Abbott, and Sugden, who have sprung from a barber's shop. He was born in 1762, and published his celebrated essay on shipping, when he was thirty years of age, in 1802. His practice had been entirely behind the Bar when he was raised to the Bench in 1816.[2] He had filled the situation of Puisne Judge with ability and dignity; and his promotion to the higher office was generally approved. Nor were the expectations which were formed at the time disappointed. Abbott filled his high office for fourteen years, and is still regarded as having been an upright and able Chief Justice.

Meeting of Parliament.

The town still rang with the story of Hone's acquittals when Parliament met on the 27th of January, 1818. The ministry had failed in nearly all the prosecutions which their law officers had attempted, and their failure threw suspicion on their whole system of administration. In other respects, however, the situation was improved. 'In the course of the autumn a gradual reduction in the price of provisions, and still more, an increased demand for labour, in consequence of a progressive improvement in the state of agriculture, as well as of trade and manufactures in some of their most important branches, afforded the means of subsistence and employment to numbers of those who had been taught to ascribe all the privations to which they were unfortunately subjected to defects in the existing constitution.'[3] Cheaper food and higher

[1] Eldon, vol. ii. p. 324.
[2] Ibid. and Denman, vol. i. p. 404.
[3] Report of Secret Committee of House of Commons, *Ann. Reg.*, vol. lx. p. 247. *Hansard*, vol. xxxvii. p. 679.

wages reconciled the people to their lot; and the employment of the working classes removed the chief inducement to riot. At the very opening of the session the ministry were able to announce that the necessity for the suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act had ceased. The Opposition heartily welcomed the repeal of the arbitrary law of the previous session, though they took the opportunity of commenting with severity on the extraordinary trials at Manchester, at Derby, and in London. Romilly, who was their chief representative on the occasion, declared his conviction 'that the late suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act was a most unnecessary and mischievous measure,' and his apprehension that it would form 'a most dangerous precedent.' The opinion of the great philanthropist has been shared by posterity; his apprehension has fortunately proved groundless. Since the days of Romilly the country has passed through greater crises, and has been the scene of greater popular commotions than those which disturbed Lord Liverpool, Lord Sidmouth, and Lord Castlereagh in 1817. But no Government since that time has ever ventured to suspend the Habeas Corpus Act in Great Britain. No succeeding minister has ventured on infringing the constitution for the sake of preserving it.

Appointment of new secret committees.

The repeal of the temporary act of the preceding session formed the first business which occupied the attention of Parliament in 1818. But the Habeas Corpus Suspension Act had hardly been repealed before ministers, in their own justification, moved for fresh secret committees in both Houses of Parliament to consider the state of the country. New sets of papers, sealed up in green bags, were again referred to these committees; and before the close of February both committees reported upon them. The committees, which were almost entirely composed of the persons who had constituted the committees of the previous session, naturally adhered to the story which they

CHAP. V. 1818.

had already told. A rising was to have taken place in the beginning of June. Nottingham was the centre of the supposed insurrection; and both the riots at Derby as well as the disturbances at Huddersfield, unimportant as they proved, were in reality connected with this premeditated outbreak. In the opinion of the committees the vigilance of the Government and the activity of the magistrates had defeated the designs of the leaders of the disaffected; the increased employment of the labouring classes had diminished the ranks of their followers; and the few people who continued to persevere in their projects had smaller numbers and resources to rely upon than before. The Government had, in consequence, been able to discharge all the persons who had been arrested under the act of the previous session; and, in discharging them, as well as in their original arrest, had acted with leniency and moderation. Only forty-four persons, who had not been brought to trial, had been arrested under the warrants of the Secretary of State; seven of them had been discharged on examination; the thirty-seven others, imprisoned under warrants of detention, had all been detained in consequence of information upon oath. Both committees were of opinion that the arrest and detention of these persons were justified by the circumstances of the case.[1]

Passage of an Indemnity Bill.

Armed with these reports, the Government, on the 23rd of February, introduced a bill into the House of Lords for indemnifying persons who, since the 26th of January, 1817, had acted in apprehending, imprisoning, or detaining in custody persons suspected of high treason or treasonable practices, and in the suppression of tumultuous and unlawful assemblies. The bill was founded on precedent; it was the logical consequence of the arbi-

[1] *Ann. Reg.*, 1818, Chron., pp. 240–249. *Hansard*, vol. xxxvii. pp. 568–575, and 679–690, where the reports of both committees will be found. Bamford was one of the persons arrested. His account of his arrest (on grounds which were utterly insufficient) and of his imprisonment will be found in the *Life of a Radical*, vol. i. p. 80, *sq.*, a book which is well worth reading.

trary measures to which the Government had resorted; and it would have been impossible for any legislature which had passed those measures to have refused assent to it. The Opposition, however, resisted it at every stage. The ministry, they insisted, were in a dilemma. If they had not acted with the moderation with which the secret committees credited them, what became of the reports of the secret committees? If they had studiously kept within their powers, where was the necessity for an indemnity? These arguments really dealt with only the fringe of the question. Whenever arbitrary powers are granted, either to the government of a country or to its local magistracy, acts must be committed on imperfect evidence which it would be difficult or even impossible to justify before a jury. If the legislature of a state decide to confer arbitrary powers on its magistracy, the least it can do is to indemnify them from any penal consequences which they may incur in exercising them. The true basis of complaint in 1818 was that the Habeas Corpus Act was suspended on inadequate grounds. No reasonable man ought to have complained of the Legislature which indemnified the magistracy for carrying out the policy on which Parliament had resolved.[1]

Strike of the cotton spinners.

With the passage of the Indemnity Act of 1818 the last record of the so-called insurrection of 1817 passed away. Consols, which had stood at 63 in January 1817, were quoted at 80 in January 1818. Wheat, which, on the former date had averaged 103*s.* a quarter, was sold

[1] The debates on the bill were very protracted. See, for the House of Lords, *Hansard*, vol. xxxvii. pp. 618–670, 713–735, 788–811. For House of Commons, ibid., pp. 881–922, 953–961, 965–1043, 1058–1060, 1080–1100. It was on the occasion of one of the numerous debates on the bill that Canning described one of the prisoners, who was made the object of especial sympathy, as 'the revered and ruptured Ogden.' The amusing epithets were probably justifiable, but they were certainly indiscreet. In the Parliamentary history the phrase is altered to the 'revered and unhappy Ogden.' *Hansard*, vol. xxxvii. p. 1026. But there can be no doubt that Canning used the less discreet words. —See Stapleton's *Canning*, vol. i. p. 86.

CHAP. V. 1818.

at 85*s*. The demand for labour steadily increased; and the operatives, who a year before had been clamouring for employment, were able to stipulate for better wages. The Lancashire cotton spinners struck work; and their strike is memorable, because it was one of the very earliest struggles, conducted on a large scale, between the rival powers of capital and labour. The case of the spinners was very temperately stated. Up to the middle of 1816, when trade first began to decline, they had been able to earn about 24*s*. a week; but their labours had commenced at five o'clock in the morning and had continued till seven in the evening. In 1816 they were assured by their employers that the fall in prices made it impossible for them to continue these terms; and they submitted to a reduction of from 20 to 25 per cent. in their wages. The employers seem either to have promised or to have implied that, on the return of better times, the old wage-rate should be restored. The better times returned; but the wages were not raised. The cotton spinners, it was argued, had suffered less than any other operative class during the recent period of distress; they should not, it was urged, press unduly on their employers. The struggle, which commenced in this way in the beginning of July, was protracted till the middle of September. The men on strike were regularly supported by contributions levied on other operatives; and the masters, unable to achieve a complete victory, were forced to content themselves with a disadvantageous compromise. They declined to submit to the general advance of seven shillings a week which the men demanded. But they took the men back at advances differing in their rates according to the circumstances of the case. The men in this way attained substantially the ends which they had in view. The masters had the satisfaction of feeling that their concessions were made to individuals, and not to the Union. Neither side, therefore, achieved an entire victory. But the circumstances of the

strike, the spirit with which it was sustained, and the period during which it was protracted, afford a remarkable proof that the strength of the working classes was increasing, and that the depression of 1817 had already disappeared.[1]

The revenue.

The condition of the revenue confirmed the conclusion. The year 1817 had witnessed an almost continuous financial depression. The committee of that year had relied on a revenue of 51,905,364*l.*; 51,665,460*l.* (or 239,904*l.* less than the estimate) was received during the year. But a large portion of this sum, or 2,330,531*l.*, was due to the arrears of unappropriated war duties and of the property tax. Without these arrears the deficit would have reached 2,570,435*l.* Nothing, then, could have been more unfavourable than the financial results of 1817. Fortunately, however, the symptoms of improvement were already visible. During the first quarter of 1818 the revenue rose from 10,513,504*l.*, its amount in the corresponding portion of 1817, to 11,309,273*l.* This improvement, in the opinion of the Select Committee on Finance, was 'manifestly the consequence of an extensive and important change in the general condition of the country.' The change, in fact, was 'too well known and felt by the House and the country to render it necessary to dwell upon it.'

The rapid increase of the revenue simplified the duty of the Chancellor of the Exchequer. The expenditure of 1817 had been placed at 67,817,752*l.*, and had actually reached 68,096,245*l.* The expenditure of 1818 was estimated at 67,351,737*l.*[2] There were, however,

[1] See mention of strike in *Ann. Reg.*, 1818, Chron., pp. 90, 101, 103, 121, 123, 128.

[2]

	£
Debt and Sinking Fund	44,437,195.
Other charges on the Consolidated Fund	2,160,968
Unfunded debt	2,300,000
Army	8,967,974
Navy	6,456,800
Ordnance	1,245,600
Miscellaneous	1,783,200
Total	£67,351,737

CHAP. V. 1818.

three various additions to be made to this sum. In the first place, the deficiencies and arrears of previous years amounted to 337,744*l.*; and in the next place two other formidable items had also to be provided for. Ever since the conclusion of the war Wilberforce had been pressing on the ministry the duty of urging foreign powers to imitate the example of England and abolish the slave trade. The ministry had, at first, only faintly seconded the exertions of the great philanthropist. But the temper of the country had convinced them that more vigorous measures were necessary; and Lord Castlereagh and the Duke of Wellington had been instructed to urge abolition on the representatives of every nation at Vienna.[1] Spain, among other countries, undertook to abolish the trade;[2] but she pleaded, as an excuse for delay, the losses which her subjects would suffer if the trade, in which they had embarked their capital, and to which they had devoted their abilities, were suddenly destroyed. The British ministry, in consequence, agreed to pay to the Spanish Government 400,000*l.* as a compensation for these losses; and the payment of the sum added the second exceptional item to the expenditure of the year. It is probably impossible to defend a grant of this description on strict principle. It is difficult to see why one country should be compelled to compensate another for doing an act of ordinary humanity. But, if it be difficult to defend a grant of this character, it is still more so to condemn it without reserve. The generosity of the action forms its fittest excuse, and redeems its authors from the charge of extravagance. The circumstances of the grant afford a striking testimony to the progress

The slave trade.

[1] See Wilberforce, vol. iv. pp. 189–200.

[2] The treaty, which was concluded on Sept. 23, 1817, made it illegal for Spanish ships to carry on the slave trade, on any part of the coast of Africa to the north of the equator *from the date of the treaty*; and from May 30, 1820, abolished the African trade entirely. Cf. Alison, vol. i. p. 352. The treaty was evaded, and was of very little good.

which abolition principles had made. Only eleven years had passed since the British slave trade had been abolished by Parliament. An agitation, protracted through an entire generation, had been barely sufficient to effect its abolition. In the eleven years which had succeeded, the abolition of the slave trade had become a pressing question; and Great Britain had, on two successive occasions, in the case of Portugal in 1815, and again in the case of Spain, displayed her readiness to pay for the success of the cause which she had been foremost in advocating. After a year of unexampled distress, when her own citizens had suffered unprecedented reverses, she devoted 400,000*l.* to the purpose of removing the scruples of the Spanish monarchy.

Grant for new churches.

The third exceptional addition which was made to the expenditure of the year was agreed to at the time almost with unanimity, but will be regarded with different views by the present generation. The ministry imagined that the disturbances which troubled the country in 1817 were attributable to its irreligious condition; and that the provision of a greater number of churches would improve the disposition of the people. There can be no doubt whatever that the church accommodation in the larger towns was wholly insufficient for the requirements of the population. Parishes which had 4,000 inhabitants and upwards contained an aggregate population of 2,947,698 souls; and they had only church room for 419,193 persons. Other parishes whose population exceeded 2,000 persons contained 4,659,786 people; but they had only church room for 949,222. The more populous parishes, therefore, had church room for only one person in every seven; the smaller parishes had church room for only one person in every five. No one, who had the interests of the Church at heart, could be satisfied with this state of things. But a good many people, interested in the welfare of the Church,

CHAP. V. 1818.

might very reasonably have doubted what the Government of the country had to do with it. Most persons are now of opinion that Parliament has no concern with the church accommodation of the people, and that the various sects into which the nation is divided should be left to build their own places of worship. This conclusion, however, had not been generally formed in 1818 The Church of England was, at that time, the Church of the State in the strict sense of the term; and the men who controlled the destinies of the State thought that they could not do better than enlarge the influence of the Church. The ministry proposed that 1,000,000*l.* should be granted by Parliament for the purpose of building new churches. The grant, it was thought, would be increased by local contributions, and it was estimated that 100 new churches could thus be constructed. The policy was, in one sense, successful. The populous suburb of Chelsea led the way with the construction of St. Luke's; and other parishes rapidly availed themselves of the liberality of Parliament. But the results of the policy will hardly commend it to the approval of the present generation. The accommodation which was required by the Church ought not to have been provided out of the funds of the State; and the provision should not at any rate have been made at a time when the country was overburdened with debt, and only slowly recovering from a period of unprecedented distress. The Church itself and the contributions of her children should have supplied the funds which she required; and men of other sects and other creeds should not have been taxed for the purpose of enlarging the usefulness of the Church of England.[1]

The religious difficulty, however, which in later times has agitated the world, had not arisen in the days of

[1] *Hansard*, vol. xxxvii. pp. 1116-1131. *Ann. Reg.*, 1818, Chron., pp. 33, 77; and ibid., 1820, Chron., p. 189.

Lord Liverpool. Lord Liverpool boldly stated his desire to abate Dissent; and his statement only elicited from Lord Holland a feeble protest that Dissent was no evil, and the expression of a faint hope that he should never see it extinguished. The Opposition, instead of disputing the principle on which the measure was based, addressed themselves to the subsidiary point whether the churches which were built under the grant should or should not be ornamental edifices. Thus proposed, and thus criticised, the measure was, of course, adopted. The 1,000,000*l.* which was required was readily voted. Fresh influence was added to the overpowering authority of the Church of England; and the Nonconformists and Roman Catholics, stripped of all power, saw themselves taxed for the support of the dominant Church.[1]

The 1,000,000*l.* for the new churches was raised by Exchequer bills. The grant did not, therefore, directly affect the expenditure of the year. Excluding this sum, the expenditure stood at rather more than 68,000,000*l.*[2] The normal income of the year was estimated at 52,500,000*l.*; the deficit accordingly exceeded 15,500,000*l.* The deficit, however, was as usual only nominal, and could have been removed by the termination of the Sinking Fund, which amounted to more than 15,000,000*l.*[3] The Sinking Fund, therefore, absorbed almost the exact sum by which the expenditure exceeded the income of the year. Its suspension, or termination, would have at once established an equilibrium in the National Balance Sheet.

During the remainder of the summer the trade of the country continued to prosper. In closing the session the

[1] Young's *Liverpool*, vol. ii. p. 366.

[2] See *ante*, p. 469 *note*, where the expenditure is given as 67,351,737*l.* In addition to this sum, 400,000*l.* had been granted on account of the Spanish Treaty, and 337,000*l.* on account of arrears.

[3] The Sinking Fund on the permanent debt amounted to 14,832,467*l.*; the Sinking Fund on the unfunded debt to 560,000*l.* The entire Sinking Fund, therefore, reached 15,392,467*l.*

CHAP. V.

1818.

Regent was able to assure the Legislature that the revenue was 'in a course of continued improvement.' 'The improvement in the internal circumstances of the country,' he went on to say, 'is happily manifest, and promises to be progressive;' and he felt 'a perfect assurance that the continued loyalty and exertions of all classes of his Majesty's subjects will confirm these growing indications of national prosperity by promoting obedience to the laws and attachment to the constitution from which all our blessings have been derived.' The improvement in the internal circumstances of the country and the continued loyalty of all classes must have been especially welcome to the Government at this juncture. The Parliament of 1812 had existed for six years, and the time was, therefore, arrived when its dissolution could not be much longer delayed. The session was brought to a close on the 10th of June, and Parliament was immediately dissolved. The dissolution would probably have occurred at a rather earlier period if the session had not been prolonged by an unexpected difficulty.

The Alien Act.

During the continuance of the war the ministry had demanded and the Legislature had given them power to remove aliens who might become the objects of suspicion, from the limits of the United Kingdom. The power was renewed in 1814 for a further period of two years; in 1816 it was again renewed for a similar term. The renewal was not granted at that time, however, without considerable opposition. In 1818, when the same power was again applied for, the bill in which it was demanded was strenuously contested. The Opposition endeavoured to resist its introduction: they met it with a direct negative at every stage, and they attempted to limit its scope in committee. But their efforts were all vain. The voting power of the Government ensured them success on every division; and the Opposition were only able to delay a measure which they were not strong enough to defeat.

When, however, the struggle had been apparently concluded it was unexpectedly revived by a very singular circumstance. The ministry accidentally discovered that, by an old act of the Parliament of Scotland, all foreigners who had acquired a certain amount of Stock in the Bank of Scotland became naturalised subjects, and they learned that a good many foreigners had lately purchased this Stock. They, therefore, decided on adding a clause to the Alien Bill in the House of Lords declaring that no foreigner who had purchased such Stock since the previous 28th of April, or who should in future do so, should thereby be naturalised.[1] The House of Lords immediately agreed to the proposal of the Government, and the bill, with this addition to it, was returned to the Commons. Here, however, a new difficulty arose. A naturalised foreigner had the right to import commodities into the country at lower rates of duty than other foreigners. A clause, therefore, which denaturalised a British subject was, in effect, a money clause, and could not be introduced in the House of Lords. The House of Commons had very little sympathy for the unfortunate foreigners, but they had a great respect for their own privileges. They declined to accept the clause; and the ministry had to give way. But, though ministers were compelled to abandon their clause, they decided on introducing a fresh bill to effect their object. The scope of the new bill was, however, much smaller than that of the clause. The clause had been retrospective, the bill was only prospective. The clause would have lasted for two years; the bill was only to last for a little more than nine months. Limited in its extent and duration, the bill passed through all its stages in both Houses of Parliament in only two days—the 8th and 9th of June.[2] On the

[1] *Hansard*, vol. xxxviii. pp. 1016–1035.

[2] *Hansard*, vol. xxxviii. pp. 1266, 1296, 1313. Romilly, vol. iii. pp. 344, 355.

CHAP. V.

following afternoon the Regent came down to Westminster and dissolved the Parliament.

1818.

The general election.

The general election of 1818 was fought with unusual bitterness on both sides. The late Parliament was unpopular; the ministry was unpopular; and the Opposition used the greatest efforts to turn this unpopularity to good account. More than half the entire seats were, indeed, at the disposal either of the Government or of some wealthy individual. In more than half the constituencies, therefore, a contest was practically impossible. But, notwithstanding this circumstance, upwards of one hundred contested elections were fought. 'It is said that there will be one hundred contests, and that Government will lose twenty or thirty members,' wrote Greville in the very remarkable diary which he was just commencing.[1] The most memorable struggles were in Westmoreland, in Westminster, and in the City. In Westmoreland, Brougham had the hardihood to attempt to wrest the county from the Lowthers; but he was compelled to retire on the fourth day of the contest. In Westminster, Romilly succeeded in being returned at the head of the poll; and Sir Francis Burdett, the leader of the Radical party in the House of Commons, retained the second seat after a severe contest with Sir Murray Maxwell, the ministerial candidate. Maxwell was so roughly handled by the mob that his life was endangered. Nor did the ministry merely fail to win a seat in Westminster. They lost their representative in the City. Sir William Curtis had sat for the City for twenty-eight years. But on this occasion he was unable to retain his seat, and the four Opposition candidates were returned. The ministry were naturally disheartened at these reverses. The Opposition were proportionately elated. The Government admitted a loss of fourteen seats; the Opposition claimed a gain of twenty-three seats in England alone.

[1] Greville, vol. i. p. 2.

Tierney himself declared that the ranks of the regular Opposition had been increased from 140 to 173 members.[1]

But, though the dissolution had had the effect of increasing its numerical strength, the Opposition had sustained losses which its increased voting power only imperfectly supplied. Few political parties had ever been deprived in so short a period of so many powerful debaters. At the close of the great war the four most prominent leaders of the Opposition in the House of Commons were Ponsonby, Whitbread, Tierney, and Romilly. The two most rising men among its younger members were Brougham and Horner. Four out of these six men died in the next three years. The death of Ponsonby occurred in 1817; and Ponsonby's place was in one sense more than filled by Tierney, whose long Parliamentary experience and whose efficiency in debate made him a peculiarly useful leader. But there was this difference between Ponsonby and Tierney: Ponsonby was a leader under whom the entire Opposition had agreed to serve. Tierney's lead was never tolerated by Lord Grenville's followers. Ponsonby's death, therefore, was the direct cause of bringing into stronger relief the differences which existed between Lord Grenville and Lord Grey, between Brougham and Tierney. The year before Ponsonby died, a rare disease, affecting the brain and causing excruciating torture, had driven Whitbread into the temporary delusion which had induced him to terminate his honourable career by his own hand. Soon after the General Election of 1818, the death of an affectionate and beloved wife, occurring at a period when his own brain was overworked, had produced the catastrophe which closed Sir S. Romilly's existence. A few months before, Horner, the champion of the ultra-Bullionists, had died at Pisa. The Opposition might almost doubt whether

Gaps in the Opposition ranks.

[1] Greville, vol. i. p. 4. Romilly, vol. iii. p. 360. Buckingham's *Regency*, vol. ii. pp. 265–268.

CHAP. V. 1818.

the gain of thirty or forty seats compensated them for the premature loss of four such men as Ponsonby, Whitbread, Romilly, and Horner. The ministry might at least congratulate themselves that, if they had more enemies to meet in the Lobby, they had fewer debaters to contend with in the House.

Prospects of increased prosperity.

Throughout the whole of the autumn, moreover, the increasing prosperity of the country pointed to the approach of happier times. The trade of 1818 was singularly prosperous; the value of the British exports reached the highest figure—41,960,000*l.*—which they had ever attained. There were one-third fewer bankruptcies in England than had occurred in the preceding year. The price of Consols, throughout the year, had been steady. Wheat, which had averaged 85*s.* 3*d.* in January 1818, was quoted at 79*s.* 6*d.* in January 1819. All these circumstances augured well for the future, and the improvement to which they seemed to point was observed by independent persons. 'I cannot resist,' so Lord Sheffield wrote to Lord Sidmouth,[1] 'the pleasure of communicating the very satisfactory accounts which I have received from different parts of the state of trade and manufactures, and particularly from the neighbourhood of Birmingham, Warwickshire, and Staffordshire. Both trade and manufactures are in a flourishing condition, and likely to improve still further.' The improvement in trade was reflected in the condition of the revenue; and the Regent, in opening the new Parliament on the 19th of January, 1819, had the 'gratification of announcing a considerable and progressive improvement of the revenue.' He had 'the greatest pleasure in being able to inform' the Legislature 'that the trade, commerce and manufactures of the country are in a most flourishing condition;' and he felt justified in inferring from these premises that 'the favourable change, which has so

[1] Sidmouth, vol. iii. p. 242.

rapidly taken place in the internal circumstances of the United Kingdom, affords the strongest proof of the solidity of its resources.' [1]

It was not, however, the first occasion on which the Regent had congratulated the Legislature on the improved prospects of the country. Only three years before, in almost precisely similar language, he had spoken of 'the flourishing condition of the commerce, manufactures, and resources' of the kingdom. Yet the boast of 1816 had been followed by a year of unprecedented distress; and there were some reasons for fearing that the expectations of 1819 were likely to be falsified by a similar disappointment. The ministers, when they met Parliament, discovered that their supporters in the country were dreading another commercial crisis. The representatives of the manufacturing constituencies were already predicting fresh difficulties. Complaints were heard from Leeds, from Carlisle, and from the Black Country of dullness in the coal and cloth trades. Large numbers of working men, unable to obtain employment, were emigrating to America; and it was almost everywhere felt that the improvement in the commercial operations of the country, which had formed so gratifying a feature in the history of the previous year, was checked.[2]

Resumption of cash payments.

The first indication of danger, however, came from another source. The Bank of England had, for more than twenty years, been permitted to issue an inconvertible currency; but it had been expressly stipulated that cash payments should be resumed within six months after the termination of the war. The country had now been for nearly four years at peace, and cash payments had not been resumed. Some persons were beginning to doubt the propriety and possibility of resuming them.

The suspension of cash payments had not, indeed,

[1] *Hansard*, vol. xxxix. p. 9. *Ann. Reg.*, vol. lxi. p. 3.
[2] *Ann. Reg.*, vol. lxi., Chron., pp. 27, 36.

CHAP. V. 1819.

been tolerated in silence by the economists of the day. For nearly twenty years a controversy had been conducted upon the subject with great ability and great spirit by the advocates of a paper currency on the one side, and the ultra-bullionists on the other. A 'Mr. Boyd, at the close of 1800,' addressed a letter to Pitt, 'ascribing the fall in the exchanges and the rise in the price of provisions to the excessive issues of Bank of England notes. Boyd was answered by Sir Francis Baring and Henry Thornton. Thornton's tract formed the subject of an article by Horner in one of the first numbers of the 'Edinburgh Review;' and Lord King, a year afterwards, followed up Horner's article with his 'Thoughts on the Effects of the Bank Restriction.' In the meanwhile the causes which had led to the controversy were rapidly subsiding. Nobody ever attracted notice by flogging a dead horse, and the currency question for the time became practically lifeless. It had been forced into notice by the rise in the exchanges and the increasing value of gold in 1800; it ceased to interest the public when the price of gold steadily fell. From 1801 to 1808 there was no appreciable difference between the value of gold and the value of Bank paper. 'The price of gold did not exceed 4*l.*, being a depreciation of between two and three per cent. Even this small difference, which, in a practical point of view, is hardly worth mentioning, would not have existed if the Bank had not needlessly held out 4*l.* as its minimum price for all the gold that might be offered.'[1]

Causes which raised the value of gold after 1808.

In 1808 the war took a new course. Britain, for the first time, sent a considerable expedition to the Continent. Wellington landed in Spain, and the Peninsular campaign, after a short interval occasioned by the Convention of Cintra, began. About the same time the full effects of the commercial policy of the French and British Governments became clear. France declared that any vessel trading

[1] Tooke's *History of Prices from* 1839 *to* 1847, p. 92.

with the British islands should be lawful prize. Britain retaliated by deciding that the Continent should have no trade except that which came to it through this country. This is not the place to consider the propriety of the policy which was thus pursued. Its effects on the currency were marked. The merchandise which Britain imported was stored up in British warehouses, and every payment which Britain had to make on the Continent was made in gold. It was much easier to smuggle gold than to smuggle goods. Napoleon was able to prevent our introducing merchandise, but was unable to prevent the importation of bullion.[1] England, then, in consequence of the Orders in Council, had to make all her payments on the Continent in gold, and not in goods. At the same period the commencement of the Peninsular campaign increased the drain upon her resources, and drew away large supplies of bullion for the purposes of the war.

These two causes alone would probably have accounted for the rapid rise in the price of gold in 1808. But a third co-existed with them. While the demand for gold was steadily increasing the usual supply of gold was suddenly stopped. At the commencement of the present century Europe depended for its supply of gold on the Spanish and Portuguese colonies of South America. But the disorders which broke out in these colonies at the commencement of the second decade of the century suddenly reduced the supply which they had previously furnished. The increase of the demand had already raised the price of bullion and depreciated the value of Bank paper. The failure of the supply continued and increased the depreciation. From 1803 to 1810 gold had remained at an uniform price of 4*l.* an ounce. In 1810 its average price rose to 4*l.* 10*s.*[2] The circumstance

[1] See letter of Mr. J. D. Hume, quoted by Mr. Tooke, *Hist. of Prices from* 1839 *to* 1847, p. 107.

[2] McCulloch, *ad verb.* 'Bank of England.'

CHAP. V. 1819.

immediately attracted considerable attention. Amidst the excitement produced by it Ricardo published his first pamphlet, 'The High Price of Gold a Proof of the Depreciation of Bank Notes;' and a few months afterwards Horner moved for and obtained the appointment of the famous Bullion Committee.[1] The committee recommended the resumption of cash payments at the end of two years; and in 1811 Horner, its chairman and guiding spirit, moved a series of resolutions in pursuance with the recommendations of the report. He was met by Vansittart, who was at that time an independent member, acting with the small band of men who followed the fortunes of Lord Sidmouth, but gave a general support to Perceval's Administration. Vansittart's resolutions affirmed the ludicrous doctrine 'that the promissory notes of the Bank of England have hitherto been, and are at this time held to be, equivalent to the legal coin of the realm.' His conclusion in this respect has been 'a standing topic of ridicule ever since.'[2] But Vansittart's resolutions did something more than affirm an untenable and ludicrous doctrine. They stated distinctly the inexpediency and danger of fixing 'a definite period for the removal of the restriction of cash payments at the Bank of England, prior to the term already fixed . . . of six months after the conclusion of a definitive period of peace.'[3] The necessities of the war made it impossible to resume cash payments, and the conclusion of peace must, therefore, precede their resumption. Such was the basis of Vansittart's opposition to Horner. Perceval, as Prime Minister, supported him on this ground. The expediency of the decision has been frequently questioned; but its propriety has been affirmed by the calmest intellect by which it has yet been reviewed. 'Taking a careful and impartial view of the circumstances of those times, I cannot

The bullion controversy in 1810.

[1] Tooke, *Hist. of Prices from* 1839 *to* 1847, p. 97.

[2] Ibid., p. 99.

[3] *Hansard*, vol. xx. p. 65.

but think,' writes Mr. Tooke, 'that the Government and the House of Commons were right in negativing the resolution making it imperative on the Bank to pay in gold at the end of two years.'[1]

Bank paper made legal tender.

Vansittart's victory assured the continued suspension of cash payments during the war; the obstinacy of his opponents forced the Government to go further. Up to 1811 payments in cash had been suspended at the Bank of England; but the Bank paper had never been made legal tender. Bank paper had practically passed current, and had been accepted in all the ordinary transactions of life; and its acceptance had been so general that Vansittart had had the folly to lay down the proposition that it was equivalent to the legal coin of the realm. The affirmation of this proposition by a considerable majority in the House of Commons elicited a very remarkable rejoinder. Lord King, who had won his spurs as a very young man by his 'Thoughts on the Effects of the Bank Restriction,' gave all his tenants notice that his rents were in future to be paid 'either in gold or in paper estimated by the price of gold.' Lord King's conduct in this respect was defended by the ultra-bullionists of the time, and has been applauded by the ultra-bullionists of a later generation. But prudent thinkers have hardly endorsed this view of the subject. If Lord King had been allowed to carry out his views there must have been a gold price and a paper price for every single commodity. 'I apprehend,' says Mr. Tooke, 'that it would have been quite impossible that two prices could have been allowed to subsist—a gold price and a paper price. The inconveniences and anomalies attending such a state of things would have been innumerable, and among these not the least would have been an increased difficulty in the eventual return to cash payments.'[2] The ministry were, there-

[1] Tooke, *Hist. of Prices from* 1839 *to* 1847, p. 114.
[2] Ibid., p. 117.

CHAP. V. 1819.

fore, forced by Lord King's declaration to make Bank notes legal tender. They supported a bill brought in by Lord Stanhope for the purpose, which was rapidly carried through both houses. Lord King's notice had thus the effect of proving the utter fallacy of the doctrine which Vansittart had laid down, and of compelling the ministry to make Bank paper legal tender. It had practically no other effect whatever.

Value of gold after 1811.

During the next four years the price of gold continued to rise. Its price in 1811 was, indeed, only slightly higher than in 1810; but its average price in 1812 rose to 4*l.* 15*s.* 6*d.*, in 1813 to 5*l.* 1*s.*, and in 1814 to 5*l.* 4*s.* per ounce. Its average price throughout 1815 and 1816 fell to 4*l.* 13*s.* 6*d.* an ounce.[1] 'In October 1816 it had fallen to 3*l.* 18*s.* 6*d.*; and that it had not fallen to the Mint price (3*l.* 17*s.* 10½*d.*) was only because the Bank had fixed this as its minimum rate.'[2] 'Gold was flowing in largely, and the bullion in the Bank had, by August 1817, reached the large amount, then without precedent, of 11,668,266*l.* There can be no doubt that the Bank was then in a condition to have resumed cash payments'[3]

In the meanwhile, however, Parliament had been induced to postpone the resumption of cash payments until the 5th of July, 1818. There was, therefore, no immediate obligation on the directors of the Bank to resort to any decisive measures; and they preferred to proceed tentatively and by gradual operations, with a view of insuring, as they hoped, the ultimate resumption of payments in specie. With this view they issued a notice in January 1817 that they were prepared to pay 'in cash all the one pound and two pound notes bearing date prior to January 1816. Finding little or no demand for cash in consequence of this notice, and their

Partial return to cash payments in 1817.

[1] McCulloch, *ad verb.* 'Bank of England.'
[2] Tooke, *Hist. of Prices from* 1839 *to* 1847, p. 130. [3] Ibid., p. 131.

treasure having continued during the course of the year to increase to an amount far exceeding what it had ever reached, and with few exceptions bearing a larger proportion to the extent of their issues than it had ever borne before, the directors issued a second notice in September 1817 for the payment in cash of all notes bearing date before the 1st January in that year.'[1] The directors had fair grounds for hoping that the second notice would occasion no greater strain on the resources of the Bank than the first.. The country was regaining its prosperity; and it was naturally expected that the Bank would derive some advantage from the universal improvement. The causes which led to a contrary result cannot perhaps be stated with absolute precision. The Convention of Aix la Chapelle, however, in the autumn of 1818, anticipated the period at which France was to be liberated from her foreign garrisons. In anticipation of the conditions of the convention, and to hasten the liberation of her territory, the French were compelled to raise some considerable loans; and a large portion of the money, thus obtained, was subscribed in this country. Russia and Austria were simultaneously entering the money market; and the English money market, notwithstanding the failures of the preceding twelve months, was still the richest in the world. Foreign loans, then, of unprecedented importance were suddenly draining the country of a considerable quantity of its capital. Gold was sent out of the country; and the exchanges were depressed. The depression of the exchanges led to a rise in the price of gold, which, for a short time, was quoted at 4*l.* 3*s.* an ounce. The directors of the Bank, with this state of things before them, hesitated to comply with the law for the resumption of cash payments in the following July. The Government admitted the weight of their reasoning

[1] *Report of Lords' Committee of* 1819, p. 3; quoted by Tooke, p. 132.

CHAP. V.

1819.

and afforded them a year of grace. By an Act of 1818 the restriction was continued to the end of the next session of Parliament.[1]

Treatment of the currency question in 1819.

When the Parliament of 1819 met it was no longer doubtful that the question of the return to cash payments must receive some definite settlement. The Opposition were irritated at the delays which had already taken place in dealing with it. The Bank itself demanded an inquiry into the whole subject, and preferred an elaborate investigation of its business to another short and temporary suspension of cash payments. The Government saw that they were compelled to act with decision, and their weakness in the new Parliament made decision absolutely necessary. Nothing, in fact, could be more pitiable than their position in the House of Commons. 'The impression of the weakness of Government increases daily,' wrote Fremantle to Lord Buckingham on the 9th of February; 'and the unity and strength of the Opposition of course improves.' Government is 'so completely paralysed that they dare do nothing, and it becomes a Government of Committees of the House of Commons.' 'It is difficult,' wrote Charles Williams Wynn[2] to the same nobleman, 'to describe to you the daily increasing appearances of weakness in the Government, which are such as, if I had not seen all I have seen during some years past, would make me think it quite impossible that they should go on for a month. They evidently have no hold on the House.'[3] Their weakness, moreover, was not only observable by experienced witnesses such as Fremantle and Wynn; the Opposition were able to prove their power in the division list. Secret committees were appointed in both Houses by ballot to consider the state of the Bank of England. The Oppo-

[1] Tooke, *Hist. of Prices from* 1839 *to* 1847, pp. 132–134.

[2] Fremantle sat with Sir J. Nugent, for Lord Buckingham's borough of Buckingham; Charles Wynn for Montgomeryshire.

[3] Duke of Buckingham's *Regency*, vol. ii. pp. 300, 301, 302.

sition endeavoured to add Brougham's name to the House of Commons Committee, and they were only defeated by 175 votes to 133.[1] They actually defeated the ministry on one point, and compelled them to give way on another relating to the settlement of the King's establishment—a subject which will be dealt with in more detail in another chapter. Reverses similar to those with which the session had thus begun continued throughout it. Grattan brought forward the claims of the Roman Catholics, and carried his motion by 243 votes to 241, or by a majority of 2. Sir James Mackintosh moved for a Committee on the Reform of the Criminal Law; and his proposal was adopted by 147 votes to 128, or by a majority of 19; and Lord Archibald Hamilton drew attention to the condition of the Scottish municipalities; and his motion for their reform was carried by 149 votes to 144, or by a majority of 5. These adverse divisions startled the Government into action. Lord Liverpool himself doubted the possibility of remaining in office. 'If we cannot carry what has been proposed,' he wrote to Lord Eldon, 'it is far, far better for the country that we should cease to be the Government. . . . A strong and decisive effort can alone redeem our character and credit, and is as necessary for the country as it is for ourselves.'[2] The question of currency reform was the question of the hour. Lord Liverpool's decision forbade its further postponement.

It has already been stated that secret committees had been appointed in both Houses 'to consider the state of the Bank of England, with reference to the expediency of the resumption of cash payments at the period fixed by law.'[3] The House of Commons committee chose for its chairman a comparatively young and inexperienced

[1] *Hansard*, vol. xxxix. p. 358.
[2] Twiss's *Eldon*, vol. ii. p. 329. *Hansard*, vol. xxxix. pp. 213, 275.
[3] *Ann. Reg.*, 1819, Hist., pp. 33, 42.

CHAP. V. 1819. Mr. Peel.

statesman, who was destined to prove the first financier of his time. Robert Peel was the eldest son of the first baronet of the same name. His father, like his great contemporaries Hargreaves and Arkwright, had begun life in humble circumstances, and by the force of his own industry and abilities had raised himself to affluence. He had the discrimination, at a very early period, to appreciate the talents of his son; and he had the good sense to give him an excellent education. Young Peel thoroughly justified his father's opinion of him. He took very high honours at Oxford, and was almost immediately afterwards brought into Parliament. The ministry, in those days, were always on the look-out for rising talent; and Perceval, who had just formed his administration, asked young Peel to second the address. Sir Robert was gratified at the minister's selection of his son, and wrote Perceval a letter of thanks which it is hardly possible to read now without a smile. 'If,' said Sir Robert, 'he (his son) has the good fortune to be honoured with your confidence, I flatter myself he will be found deserving of the trust reposed in him. He possesses capacity, industry, and virtuous habits; and, under the guidance of a judicious and well-informed friend, he may become a useful member of society.'[1] Most people will think that the second Sir Robert Peel did something more than become a useful member of society. He acquitted himself so well in 1810 that room was almost immediately found for him in a subordinate office in the ministry. On Wellesley Pole's retirement, in 1813, Peel was promoted to the difficult and anxious post of Chief Secretary for Ireland, and in that capacity it became his duty to conduct the Irish legislation of the Government. The retirement, in 1817, of Abbot, the first Lord Colchester, from the Speakership brought Peel into even greater prominence. Abbot had represented the University of

[1] Perceval, *Memoirs*, vol. ii. p. 58.

Oxford; and Canning was very anxious to succeed him as member for the University. Canning, however, was disposed to regard the claims of the Roman Catholics with favour; and uncompromising Tories like Lord Eldon and his brother, Sir W. Scott, the remaining member for the University, were determined to prevent the election of any member with Catholic sympathies. Their prejudices prevailed: Canning's name was unfavourably received; and Peel, still young and comparatively obscure, was preferred to him. Two years afterwards Peel retired from the Chief Secretaryship. The causes which led to his resignation were never thoroughly explained; but it is probable that they originated in the Oxford election. Peel did not conceal his dislike of Canning's conduct and policy; Canning was 'out of heart' at the growing powers of Peel.[1] Peel retired; and he was, therefore, out of office at the commencement of 1819. The Government wisely selected him as the chairman of the secret committee appointed to inquire into the affairs of the Bank.

Peel professed that he had 'formed no opinion' on the currency question, and that he was 'open to conviction.' Yet it is probable that the ministry imagined that his judgment would ultimately incline to the continued suspension of cash payments. The majority of the committee was composed of ministerialists, and there was reason to believe that Peel would adopt the opinions which Vansittart had formed in 1810. His father, Sir Robert, was known to be a strong anti-bullionist, and Peel was suspected of sharing his father's opinions. He had voted against Horner's resolutions in 1811; and he afterwards avowed that he went into the committee with a very different opinion from that which he ultimately formed. But the proceedings in the committee induced him to entirely change his views. He was led to concur

[1] Liverpool, vol. ii. p. 376.

CHAP. V. 1819.

in the principles laid down in Horner's resolutions and to advocate the expediency of returning to cash payments. His influence with the committee was so great that the other members were readily induced to adopt his opinions. A return to cash payments was agreed to, and the means of renewing payments in cash alone remained for consideration. The excellent position of the Bank facilitated this object. The liabilities of the Bank on the 30th of January, 1819, amounted to 33,894,580*l.*, its assets to 39,096,900*l.* The committee recommended that the Bank should be gradually repaid a sum of 10,000,000*l.* which it had advanced to the Government; and that the resumption of cash payments should be effected by four distinct processes: After the 1st of February, 1820, the Bank was to deliver on demand gold of standard fineness at the rate of 4*l.* 1*s.* per oz. in quantities of not less than 60 oz. After the 1st of October, 1820, it was to deliver gold at the rate of 3*l.* 19*s.* 6*d.* per oz.; and after the 1st of May, 1821, at the rate of 3*l.* 17*s.* 10½*d.* per oz. From the 1st of May, 1823, the Bank was to pay its notes in the legal coin of the realm. The principle, then, which the committee enforced was to compel the Bank to pay bullion, not coin, for large quantities of its paper, at rates diminishing from time to time till they attained the Mint price of gold. The House of Commons unanimously assented to the resolutions which were founded on the reports of the committee. Bills founded on these resolutions were introduced and passed without material amendment; and the Bank, anticipating the decision of the committee, ultimately succeeded in paying cash for its notes, of whatever amount, after the 1st of May, 1821.[1]

Resumption of cash payments carried.

Importance of the decision.

The resumption of cash payments is perhaps the most important incident in the financial history of the present century. The return to a metallic standard was universally agreed to at the time; a departure from a metallic

[1] *Hansard*, vol. xl. pp. 152, 604, 676. *Ann. Reg.*, 1819, Hist., p. 66.

'standard would not be tolerated now. Yet there are hundreds of people who probably still believe that the Act of 1819 inflicted injury on the country, and that the distress and disorders, which unhappily made that year memorable, were, in some way or other, attributable to it. The world derives its knowledge of the early history of the century from the pages of Alison; and Alison was, unfortunately, convinced of the supreme wisdom of Pitt's Sinking Fund, and impressed with the extreme folly of the Act of 1819. The constant dropping of the softest water will wear away the hardest rock; the constant iteration of the same fallacy will make an impression on the most unimpressionable intellect. The world owes much to Alison for his admirable account of the Revolutionary struggle; and it is legitimate to regret that his erroneous views on finance should have depreciated the value of his later history.

Money.

Men often apparently differ from one another when their differences are really due to their using words in different senses. The Legislature has found it necessary again and again to define the exact sense which it applies to the words it employs. It would be a very good thing if all disputants were compelled to follow the same rule. Men talk loosely of 'money' and 'currency,' as if these words conveyed a meaning which did not admit of dispute. Yet it is impossible to determine whether there was a money famine in 1819 without first deciding what is meant by the term 'money.' Alison would never have fallen into the errors which his later work contains if he had begun by defining the meaning of the words which he used.

Sir A. Alison imagined that a public institution, issuing under the authority of the State certain pieces of paper, called bank-notes, is able to extend the supply of money available for the use of the world. But, of course, it can do nothing of the kind. A bank-note is in reality the

CHAP. V. 1819.

same thing as a cheque. It is an order made by the bank, just as a cheque is an order made by the drawer, to pay a definite sum of money to the holder thereof. The value of a cheque depends on the credit of the person who signs it; the value of a bank-note depends on the credit of the bank which issues it. If the person signing the cheque is known to be solvent, the cheque circulates as readily as gold. If the credit of the bank issuing the note be unimpeachable, its note circulates as readily as gold. Neither the cheque nor the note have any intrinsic value of their own. Their value depends on the credit of the person or bank whose name they bear. Bank-notes and cheques are not, in other words, money; they are merely the convenient representatives of money.

The bank-note, then, like the cheque or the bill, is merely a promise to pay, either on demand or at some stated period, a definite sum of money. It is a pledge, written on an article of no value, for an article of very great value. Money itself may consist of any valuable commodity; but it is essential that the commodity should be valuable. In advanced stages of society the precious metals have been uniformly the commodities used as money; and they are evidently the most suitable for the purpose. The value of the precious metals is less variable than that of any other commodity; it is the most easily ascertainable. These metals have therefore been selected by all civilised states as the commodities most suitable for use as money. But the production of the precious metals depends on the laws which govern the production of other like commodities. They can only be won by the application of labour and capital, or the earnings of previous labour. When they are so produced they become a portion of the capital or stock in trade of the persons to whom they belong. Just as the corn merchant trades in corn, or the East India merchant in tea, or the West India merchant in sugar, so the bullion merchant trades in

gold and silver. The man who buys gold and silver invests his capital in bullion; the man who sells gold and silver sells so much of his capital. Most men, indeed, retain a certain portion of capital, either at their banker's or in their pockets, as money for immediate use. It is the object of a banker to employ the capital which his customers thus leave in his hands. A bank, in short, derives its profits from employing the unemployed capital of its customers.

A man's money, then, is a portion of his capital. So long as he has the money at his disposal it is immaterial to his creditors whether he pay them in gold or by a cheque, which they may exchange for gold. The customers of the Bank are in the same position as the creditors of the individual. A bank-note, which may at any moment be exchanged for 5*l.*, is accepted as readily as 5*l.* For a great many purposes paper is even more convenient than gold. If a man take a hundred thousand sovereigns from the Bank and send them to Australia, he will have to pay for the carriage of a bulky parcel; he will run the risk of losing a very valuable commodity; and the mere friction of the coins with each other will slightly reduce their value by the end of the journey. If a man send a bill of exchange or a cheque for the same amount, he will incur little or no expense for its carriage, he will run no risk of losing a valuable commodity, and the cheque or the bill will lose none of its value during transit. The use of paper as the representative of money minimises the waste of bullion, reduces the risk of its loss, and facilitates every commercial transaction. Paper, then, cannot be too largely used as the symbol of money; but it cannot be too clearly remembered that the paper so used is not money, but merely the representative of money, for which it may at any moment be exchanged.

Such is the state of things when paper is employed in

CHAP. V. 1819.

every commercial transaction for money, and when that paper is exchangeable at the will of the holder for gold. Very different is the state of things when paper is not exchangeable for gold, or when cash payments are, in other words, suspended. Then the paper of the Bank is not taken because it is exchangeable for gold, but because its customers have confidence in the ultimate solvency of the institution. When the operations of its customers are confined to transactions with people intimately acquainted with the solvency of the Bank, the Bank paper circulates at about par. When they have occasion to deal with distant countries, inspired possibly with a distrust of paper, with which they have only a slight acquaintance, the Bank paper falls in value, and the relative price of gold rises. The value of the paper does not necessarily depend on its contraction or on its expansion, but on the purposes to which it is applied. A large foreign expenditure reduces the price of paper, because foreigners regard paper with distrust. A busy internal trade does not reduce the value of paper, because the parties using it have faith in the stability of the Bank. 'Whenever,' said Mr. Tooke, writing of the period during which cash payments were suspended, 'there was a pause or cessation of the unusually large foreign expenditure by the Government, or of unusually large importations of corn, there was also a tendency to a restoration of the value of the paper, by a rise in the exchanges, without any contemporaneous or immediately preceding reduction in the amount of Bank notes.' And again: 'Without committing myself to the assertion that the price of gold invariably rose and fell with the extent of the Government demand for coin and bullion for remittances, I may observe that during the four years (1813–1816) there is a very close correspondence between the magnitude of the Government purchases and the published market prices.'[1]

[1] Tooke, *Hist. of Prices from* 1839 *to* 1847, pp. 132, 124.

It is evident, then, that when cash payments are suspended any extensive dealings with other countries tend to depreciate the price of paper, and that the price of paper rises and falls with the expansion and contraction of such transactions. But every rise and fall in the value of paper currency imposes enormous inconvenience on the country which is compelled to use it. The precious metals are admirably adapted for use as money, because they are subject to comparatively slight variations of value. The inconvertible paper notes of a bank supply the place of money most imperfectly, because, among other reasons, the value which is nominally attached to them is constantly changing. What would be thought of a state of society in which the yard measure at one time contained 36 inches and at another only 23; or in which a ton of coals at one time consisted of 20 hundredweight and at another of only 12? Yet just as much difficulty arises from a variation in the standard of value as would arise from a variation in the standards of measure and of weight. An accurate settlement of all these standards is one of the first duties of civilised society.

Inconveniences attending the rise and fall of paper.

Constant fluctuations in value are, then, the consequence of an inconvertible paper currency. The value of the paper issues of the Bank of England was exposed to considerable fluctuations between 1810 and 1820. For this reason alone the suspension of cash payments had become an intolerable inconvenience, and a return to specie transactions indispensable. But, though it was absolutely necessary for the Government to insist on the resumption of cash payments, there can be no doubt that considerable embarrassments resulted from their decision. It is impossible to degrade the currency of a state without inflicting a heavy loss on every creditor in the country. Their debts are paid in a currency bearing the names attached to the old coins, but retaining

CHAP. V. 1819.

only a portion of their value. But, when the currency of a state is depreciated, it is equally impossible to restore it to its former value without inflicting a loss on every debtor in the community. Debts incurred when a pound was really only worth fifteen shillings have to be paid in the new pound which is worth twenty. For this reason it is probably desirable for a community which has had the misfortune to have had recourse to issues of inconvertible paper to resume cash payments by gradual processes, and to contract its inconvertible currency by degrees. The change in the value of the currency takes place in this way more slowly, and debtors and creditors are able to arrange their mutual concerns without any very serious loss or any very great gain on either side. It is possible, in short, to question the propriety of any particular method of resuming cash payments; but it is impossible to doubt that it should be the object of every community to resume them. The nation which deliberately retains an inconvertible paper currency prefers the risk of constant fluctuation in the money market to the certainty of one sharp crisis. The writer who proposes to defend the issue of inconvertible paper must be prepared to show that a fixed standard of value is not as necessary as fixed standards of weight and measure.

Selection of gold as the sole standard of value.

It is impossible, then, to doubt the prudence of the decision which induced the Government in 1819 to return to cash payments. The Act of 1819 effected the termination of an exceptional state of things, which had only been tolerable from the circumstances which had led to it. Had the suspension of cash payments continued, violent fluctuations must have again occurred in the value of Bank paper; and each of these fluctuations must have involved a crisis ruinous in its consequences to some class of persons. The Act of 1819 placed the commerce of the country on a sounder basis. The standard of value

no longer varied with every rise and fall of the political barometer; but was exempt from every variation except that slow and gradual change which, it is possible, is occurring in the value of gold. But there is another reason for which the Act of 1819 may be remembered with gratitude. A nation returning to cash payments may obviously select either gold or silver as the standard of value, or it may establish what is called a bi-metallic currency, and allow gold and silver to be equally legal tender. In deciding that gold should be the sole standard of value, the framers of the Act of 1819 conferred a benefit on posterity which it was almost impossible to foresee at the time. It was obvious, indeed, that it was impossible to predict that the relative value of two metals, produced in different places and under different circumstances, would always remain unchanged. But experience favoured the assumption that a pound of gold would always be worth about fifteen-and-a-half pounds of silver; and a rapid fall in the value of silver could not have been foreseen. More than half a century after the Act of 1819, a variety of circumstances contributed to depreciate the value of silver; and in consequence to raise the relative value of gold. The inconveniences experienced by other countries, in which either bi-metallic money had been established, or silver had been made the sole standard of value, proved the foresight of our ancestors in resting our monetary system on one metal alone, and that metal the most valuable of all metals, gold.[1]

Huskisson's memorandum on finance.

The decision to return to cash payments necessitated more than ordinary care in the financial arrangements of the year. The Government owed the Bank 10,000,000*l.*

[1] A good many of the Whigs and of other moderate politicians thought that the crisis might have been more easily tided over by making silver the legal standard, or by adopting a bi-metallic currency. Ward raised the point in one of his letters to the Bishop of Llandaff; and Lord Lansdowne's opinions upon it will be found in the debate on the Duke of Richmond's motion, in February 1830.—*Hansard*, New Series, vol. xxii. p. 991.

CHAP. V. 1819.

Peel's committee had recommended that the debt should be paid, and the Bank required its payment in the course of the next two years. Some caution was necessary on this account; and a much more important reason for deliberation was to be found in another circumstance. The leading members of the Opposition had already realised the fact that the financial system of the country was founded on a delusion. But the truth was only slowly stealing on the perceptions of the Government. Among the less prominent, but abler, members of the Liverpool Administration was William Huskisson. Born in 1770, brought into Parliament in 1796, he had been appointed at the close of the century to a subordinate office in Pitt's Ministry. In 1801 he had retired with Pitt; and, on Pitt's restoration to power in 1804, he had filled the office of Secretary to the Treasury. He resumed this situation under the Duke of Portland in 1807, but unfortunately found it necessary to withdraw his services from the Ministry on the retirement of Canning in 1809. Since 1814 he had occupied a newly-created and comparatively unimportant office as Chief Commissioner of Woods and Forests and Land Revenue.[1] But, though he was placed in an unostentatious position, his financial knowledge, which far exceeded Vansittart's, was fully recognised by the Ministry. His views, indeed, had little accord with those of his colleagues. Alone among the Tory Ministry, Huskisson had accepted the truths of Adam Smith's gospel; and was prepared to act, as far as possible, on the principles of free trade. The single financier that England produced between the death of Pitt and the rise of Peel, it was his fate never to be employed in any high financial situation. The Ministry preferred the routine errors of Vansittart to the novel truths which were being pressed on them by Huskisson.

At the very commencement of the Session of 1819,

[1] Huskisson's *Memoir and Speeches*, vol. i. pp. 36–66.

Huskisson forwarded to Lord Liverpool a remarkable memorandum on the resumption of cash payments. He insisted in it on the necessity of a large reduction in the Unfunded Debt, and he dwelt on the method by which cash payments should be resumed. He went on to point out the follies of the course which the Chancellor of the Exchequer was pursuing. The 'mystery of our financial system no longer deceives anyone in the money market; selling exchequer bills daily to redeem funded debt daily, then funding those exchequer bills once a year, or once in two years, in order to go over the same ground again; whilst the very air of mystery, and the anomaly of large annual or biennial loans in times of profound peace, create uneasiness out of the market, and in foreign countries an impression unfavourable with respect to the solidity of our resources. In finance, expedients and ingenious devices may answer to meet temporary difficulties; but, for a permanent and peace system, the only wise course either in policy or for impression is a system of simplicity and truth.'[1]

Such were the views which Huskisson propounded to his colleagues. He recommended that the Sinking Fund should be cancelled, and that the surplus income should alone be applicable to the redemption of the debt. The real surplus amounted to about 2,000,000*l.* But, as the Sinking Fund amounted to about 15,500,000*l.*, there was an apparent deficit of 13,500,000*l.* In addition, moreover, to the supplies of the year, Vansittart desired to fund 10,597,000*l.* of unfunded debt. The total sum, therefore, which he required was not 13,500,000*l.* but 24,000,000*l.* Vansittart decided on raising one-half of this sum, or 12,000,000*l.*, in the ordinary way by a loan. He decided 'to borrow the other moiety of 12,000,000*l.* from the Sinking Fund.'[2] A new Sinking Fund was created

Vansittart's financial policy.

[1] Yonge's *Liverpool*, vol. ii. p. 382.
[2] *Hansard*, vol. xl. p. 1004.

CHAP. V. 1819.

on the money so borrowed; and solemn preparations were made for extinguishing on paper a debt which had no real and palpable existence. All Vansittart's efforts, however, to preserve the Sinking Fund could not hide the fact that the fund, or three-fourths of it, was being applied to the current services of the year. The fact was so plain that Vansittart decided on attempting to increase the surplus by additional taxation. He persuaded the House of Commons to resolve 'that to make such progressive reductions of the National Debt as may adequately support public credit, it is necessary that there should be a clear surplus of not less than 5,000,000*l.*, and that, with a view to the attainment of this object, it is expedient to increase the income of the country by the imposition of taxes to the amount of 3,000,000*l.* per annum.'[1]

It was exactly eight years since Vansittart had induced the House to affirm that the paper of the Bank of England was equivalent to the legal coin of the realm. The resolution had been received with the ridicule which it had deserved; but it had fortunately proved only a harmless misstatement of a fact. The consequences of his new resolution were much more serious. Prudent men failed to see the necessity for maintaining the clear surplus of 5,000,000*l.* which Vansittart insisted on preserving. They thought that no obligation was thrown upon the country except that of honestly paying its way, and that it was both ridiculous and dangerous to affirm that, in addition to doing so, it was necessary to reduce its mortgages by 5,000,000*l.* annually. 5,000,000*l.* was obviously an arbitrary sum, having no special virtue of its own. No doubt a surplus was eminently desirable, but it was a mere matter of degree, and therefore of opinion, whether it should amount to 5,000,000*l.* or only 2,000,000*l.* It could not be advisable to resort to additional taxation at

[1] *Hansard*, vol. xl. pp. 864, 912-974. *Ann. Reg.*, 1819, Hist., p. 90.

a time when the country, just recovering from the distresses of previous years, was not in a position to assume new burdens.

These objections to Vansittart's policy were increased by the vexatious nature of the taxes he desired to impose. At the very head of them all stood an enormous addition to the duties on foreign wool. The woollen manufacture was one of the most important industries in the country; the manufacturers were notoriously dependent on foreign wool; their trade at the moment was declining, and Vansittart decided on raising the duty from 6*s.* 8*d.* to 56*s.* a cwt.[1] Such an increase would have been sufficiently deplorable if a deficient revenue had made it unavoidable. It seemed utterly unnecessary when, on the author's own showing, there was a clear surplus of 2,000,000*l.* a year. 'The consternation in the City is very great,' wrote Wynn to Lord Buckingham. 'Their outcry against Vansittart increases daily, and is quite universal.'[2]

Internal distress and emigration.

Before the decision of the Ministry had been announced the internal condition of the country was creating anxiety. A vast number of labourers were out of employment, and the Government seriously contemplated transplanting the surplus population to one of the British colonies. The unhappy workmen themselves desired to seek their fortune in the United States of America, but the Ministry refused to assist them to emigrate to any country except a British colony. The colony which the Ministry selected, the Cape of Good Hope, had only recently been formally ceded to the United Kingdom. The mildness of its climate and the fertility of its soil were supposed to make it a peculiarly eligible settlement for British workmen. The circumstance that it was situated on the direct route to India probably contributed to recommend it to the

[1] McCulloch, *ad verb.* 'Wool.' *Ann. Reg.*, 1819, Hist., p. 91.
[2] *Regency Memoirs*, vol. ii. p. 327.

CHAP. V. 1819.

favourable notice of the Government. They accordingly offered to assist any intending emigrants to the Cape, and obtained a vote of 50,000*l.* for the purpose.[1] The decision was timely, but the emigration of a few hundreds of persons was insufficient to reduce the supply of redundant labourers in an overstocked labour market. The existing distress continued, and the popular agitators, encouraged by it, renewed the designs which they had temporarily suspended. At the very commencement of the year the Borough Reeve of Manchester was invited to summon a public meeting for the purpose of petitioning Parliament against the Corn Laws. The Borough Reeve refused, and an anonymous advertisement appeared announcing the meeting for the 18th of January. The meeting was held. Hunt, who presided at it, ridiculed the idea of petitioning Parliament, and prevailed on the meeting to agree on a remonstrance to the Regent. Nothing, however, came of the suggestion. For the next few months quiet continued to prevail, and the peace of the country was not disturbed.

Reform movement.

As the summer, however, advanced the depression of trade became more marked, and the agitation of the lower orders more serious. 'The weavers' in Ayrshire, wrote Lord Cassilis to Lord Buckingham, 'are literally starving; the utmost that an ordinary weaver can make per week is 2*s.* 7*d.*, working from 14 to 16 hours in the day.' 'The state of Lancashire and its immediate neighbourhood,' wrote the Prime Minister to the Duke of Wellington, 'is very alarming, and deserves serious consideration.'[2] At the end of May it was found necessary to move troops to Carlisle, 'in consequence of the riotous disposition of the weavers.'[3] Numbers of colliers in the Black Country were thrown out of employment about the same time.

[1] *Ann. Reg.*, 1819, Hist., p. 87.

[2] Buckingham's *Regency*, vol. ii. p. 372. Wellington *Despatches*, vol. i. p. 76.

[3] *Ann. Reg.* 1812, Chron., pp. 35, 36.

The general want of work led to combinations among the workmen, and these unions were soon used for political purposes. A reform of Parliament was demanded both by the Radical Reformers in the country and by the Whig party in the House of Commons. Lord Tavistock was the eldest son of the Duke of Bedford: the vast possessions to which he was heir gave him a stake in the country which it was impossible to ignore. Long tradition had connected the family to which he belonged with the cause of enlightened advancement. Lord Tavistock desired to correct the abuses which had grown up in the Constitution; he disapproved the theories of the Radicals as wild and impracticable. Lord Tavistock presented a petition from 1,800 respectable householders of Liverpool praying for representation. Liverpool had two members, but its members were elected by so small a body of persons that the bulk of the population were practically unrepresented. The petition was received; and, immediately after its receipt, a very different man from Lord Tavistock rose to propose a scheme of Reform. Sir Francis Burdett lived to change the principles which he professed during the earlier period of his political career. But, in 1819, he was the object of a political animosity which is almost incredible. His opinions were identified with those of Cobbett, Hunt, and others of the advanced Radical Reformers. His conduct in 1810, in defying the authority of the House of Commons, and in resisting the Speaker's warrant, had made him the darling of the mob, but had won for him the detestation of both the great political parties in the State. His popularity among the lower orders made him member for Westminster; but his victory at Westminster gained him no support in the House. Even Brougham loathed the prospect of supporting the Burdettites.[1]

In the House of Commons.

[1] Brougham, vol. ii. p. 341.

CHAP. V.

1819.

Sir F. Burdett, in 1819, rested his motion for Reform on the solid hypothesis that representation and taxation should go together. The country, he urged, was overburdened with taxation. The manufacturers were indigent; the farmers on the verge of ruin; the labouring poor unable to subsist on their miserable wages. The agricultural classes maintained that they could not go on unless they were protected by heavy duties on foreign wool. The clothiers replied that their bankruptcy could only be arrested by the free admission of foreign wool and a heavy duty on foreign goods. Parliament could not move without incurring the risk of destroying some interest, and the only practicable course was to reduce the taxation under which all classes groaned. In the present corrupt state of the Government, however, neither Tories nor Whigs could succeed in effecting the economies without which remissions of taxation were impossible. A Reform of Parliament was therefore the necessary preliminary to a more economical administration; and Sir Francis Burdett asked the House to pledge itself to take the subject of the representation into its most serious consideration at the commencement of the next Session. The motion had the effect of eliciting from the Opposition Benches some warm declarations in favour of a limited measure of Reform. But the voting power of the Reformers proved on a division lamentably small. They only mustered 58 votes to their opponents' 153. Not one-third of the House of Commons thought it even necessary to mark their interest in the question of Reform by their attendance at the division.[1]

In the country.

Yet events were rapidly occurring outside the House which were forcing the question of Reform on the attention of the country. The rejection of Burdett's motion in the House of Commons was the signal for some very

[1] *Ann. Reg.*, 1819, Hist., pp. 79–84.

singular proceedings. Huge Reform meetings were held at Smithfield, at Birmingham, at Leeds, at Stockport, and at other places; and at Birmingham the meeting was advised to take a novel course. Sir Charles Wolseley, a Staffordshire baronet imbued with the principles of Burdett, was elected Legislatorial Attorney[1] for the town. Some of the more ignorant of the populace, who cheered Sir Charles Wolseley's election, may have imagined that they had really succeeded in securing for themselves a representation in Parliament. Better-informed persons might have been satisfied with treating the whole proceedings with contempt. The Ministry, however, were not likely to regard acts of this character with indifference. More than a year afterwards some of the principal people concerned in Sir C. Wolseley's election were prosecuted and convicted. Sir Charles Wolseley, full of his new dignity as member for Birmingham, attended a meeting at Stockport. He used on that occasion very foolish and very weak but bombastic language, and, in company with a dissenting parson, Mr. Harrison, was arrested by a constable named Birch. Poor Birch, who, at any rate, had only done his duty, was shot by some sympathising Radical. Wolseley and Harrison were tried for sedition, in the following April, at the Cheshire Assizes, and were severely punished.[2]

The Peterloo meeting.

These meetings had necessarily created great anxiety in the public mind. The only people who seemed to feel no anxiety were the Ministers of the Crown. The country was in a critical condition, yet the majority of the Cabinet were scattered through Europe. 'With the exception

[1] This was done on the advice of old Major Cartwright, who was one of the persons prosecuted for the Birmingham election. Cartwright seems to have seen the absurdity of a town conferring a representative upon itself, and to have persuaded his friends to elect, not a member, but an attorney, who was to present their claim to the Speaker. He desired 'to send a petition in form of a living man instead of one on parchment or paper.'—*Life of Major Cartwright*, vol. ii. pp. 164–168.

[2] *Ann. Reg.*, 1819, Hist., p. 105; ibid., 1820, Chron., pp. 148, 908–920, 958–961.

CHAP. V. 1819.

of Liverpool, Castlereagh, Sidmouth, Wellington, Van, and myself,' wrote Lord Eldon, 'they are all, eight in number, in different parts of Europe.'[1] Yet events were hastening to a crisis with alarming rapidity. Manchester decided on following the example of Birmingham, and on electing a legislatorial attorney. A great meeting was called for the purpose on the 16th of August. In 1819 there was a small piece of land on the outskirts of Manchester which has long since been absorbed by the growing city, but which was still unbuilt over. Building operations were indeed in progress in parts of it, and pieces of timber left by the builders were scattered about it. Being in the immediate neighbourhood of St. Peter's church the land was known as St. Peter's field or Peterloo. It had been occasionally used by the Reformers for public meetings, and the Blanketeers had met upon it in 1817. It was decided that the meeting of the 16th of August should be held on this field. Every effort was made by its promoters to insure its success. Hunt, the ostensible leader of the Radicals, was invited and consented to preside at it. The men who were to take part in the meeting underwent some preliminary drill, in order that they might be able to move on to the ground with some approach to military regularity; and banners, of all kinds and colours, were prepared to decorate the various processions. On the other hand, the authorities were equally vigilant; troops at their request were moved to Manchester. Special constables were enrolled in great numbers for the preservation of the peace; and the Yeomanry of Lancashire and Cheshire were called out for service. The preparations on both sides were complete, and the event was awaited with anxiety by the authorities and the people.

The morning came, and the sun had hardly risen before the character of the demonstration was visible.

[1] Eldon, vol. ii. p. 336.

From every suburb of Manchester, from every village within marching distance of the great city, processions of working men were converging on the place of meeting. Most of the processions moved under banners. On one of these was inscribed 'Liberty or death!' on another 'We will conquer our enemies!' on a third, a huge black banner, 'Equal representation or death!' on a fourth 'No corn laws!' on a fifth 'Hunt and liberty.' The women shared the enthusiasm which seized their husbands and brothers; a female procession marched to the meeting. No serious disorders seem, however, to have taken place on any of the roads by which St. Peter's field was approached. The tradesmen took the precaution to close their shops; the upper classes probably forbore as a rule to venture into the streets; and from 50,000 to 60,000 men marched into St. Peter's Field, without committing any serious breach of the peace.

The county magistrates were, in the meanwhile, anxiously awaiting the event in a house belonging to a Mr. Buxton, which adjoined and overlooked the field. They had extended a line of constables from this house to the temporary hustings—some movable wagons—which had been placed in the centre of the ground. It was their obvious intention to maintain a line of communication between their own position and the leaders of the meeting. But the object was defeated by a very simple expedient. The wagons which formed the hustings were moved into a different part of the field, and the communication between them and the magistrates was thus broken. At this moment Hunt was observed to commence his address to the crowd from the hustings. Nadin, the chief constable of Manchester, was ordered to arrest him; but Nadin stated, what was evidently true, that it was utterly impossible for him to do so. The magistrates therefore sent for the commanders of the Manchester Yeomanry and of the 15th Hussars, which were in readi-

CHAP. V. 1819.

ness. The Yeomanry arrived first and suffered themselves to be scattered among the crowd, who closed on them, groaned and hissed, and waved their sticks in a menacing manner. Colonel L'Estrange, who commanded the Hussars, arrived immediately afterwards, and asked for orders. 'Good God, sir,' said Mr. Hulton, who presided over the magistrates, 'do not you see how they are attacking the Yeomanry? Disperse the crowd.' L'Estrange retired to his men. The Hussars were pushed under his orders rapidly through the streets till they reached the south-west corner of the field; the words 'Front,' and 'Forward' were given, and the trumpet sounded the charge at the very moment the troops wheeled up. 'The charge swept the mingled mass of human beings before it; people, yeomen, and constables, in their confused attempts to escape, ran one over the other;' and by the time the troops 'had arrived at the end of the field the fugitives were literally piled up to a considerable elevation above the level of the ground.' The field and the adjacent streets now presented an extraordinary sight; the ground was quite covered with hats, shoes, sticks, musical instruments, and other things. Here and there lay the unfortunates who were too much injured to move away: and this sight was rendered the more distressing because it was observed that some women were among the sufferers. In the meanwhile the charge of the Hussars had enabled the constables to execute their warrant. Hunt quietly surrendered to Nadin, and was removed in custody. His removal terminated the meeting. Troops, indeed, patrolled the town throughout the ensuing night; but no fresh breach of the peace occurred. At six the next morning the officer in command reported to the magistrates that the town was perfectly quiet, and requested their sanction to the return of the military to their quarters.[1]

[1] *Ann. Reg.* 1819, Hist., p. 106; 1820, Chron., pp. 848–895. Sidmouth, vol. iii. pp. 249–260. Cf. *Life of a Radical*, vol. i. p. 176, *sq.*

Such was the history of the lamentable meeting at Peterloo on the 16th of August. It was obvious to everyone that the magistrates had incurred a very grave responsibility. They had ordered the military to disperse a large assembly of their defenceless fellow-citizens; and nothing could justify the order except a clear apprehension that the meeting which they had determined to disperse was illegal. Nothing, however, could be more difficult than to decide whether the Manchester meeting was or was not illegal. At first, indeed, Lord Eldon was disposed to take the high ground of declaring it an overt act of treason. Under an Act, which he had himself been instrumental in passing, 'a conspiracy to levy war, a conspiracy to depose' the king, 'a conspiracy by force to make a change in either House of Parliament—manifested by an overt act—is treason.' 'When he read in his law books,' he said some months afterwards in the House of Lords, 'that numbers constituted force, force terror, and terror illegality, he felt that no man could deny the Manchester meeting to have been an illegal one.' Lord Redesdale, who had served with distinction as Chancellor of Ireland, and who was one of the greatest equity lawyers of the day, took precisely the same view. 'Every meeting for Radical reform,' he wrote, 'was not merely a seditious attempt to undermine the existing constitution and Government by bringing it into hatred and contempt, but it was an overt act of treasonable conspiracy against that constitution of Government, including the king as its head, and bound by his coronation oath to maintain it.' The opinions of these high authorities probably prevailed with the law officers to whom the matter was referred. They joined with Lord Eldon in advising the Government 'that they were fully satisfied that the meeting was of a character and description, and assembled under such circumstances, as justified the magistrates in dispersing it by force.'[1]

The Government approve the conduct of the magistrates.

[1] Eldon, vol. ii. pp. 338, 348. Sidmouth, vol. iii. p. 278. Liverpool, vol. ii. p. 409.

CHAP. V. 1819.

Nothing could have been stronger than these opinions; yet the very confidence with which they were expressed justified a hesitation in accepting them. If Lord Eldon and Lord Redesdale were right, it was treason for a few thousand persons to meet together and demand any reform in the House of Commons. A few thousand persons constituted numbers, numbers force, and a conspiracy by force to make a change in the constitution of the House of Commons was treason. The old right of meeting was then effectually destroyed if these opinions prevailed. But, in the first place, the verdict in the Spa Fields Riot made it hopeless to expect that juries would affirm this view of the law; and, in the next place, Lord Eldon and Lord Redesdale themselves concluded that legislation was necessary. Lord Redesdale, indeed, with characteristic acuteness, desired only a declaratory law to remove 'all doubt of the treasonable criminality of such assemblies.' Lord Eldon admitted that 'the state of our law is so inapplicable to existing circumstances that we can't meet the present case; and I am convinced, as I am of my existence, that if Parliament don't forthwith assemble there is nothing that can be done but to let these meetings take place, reading the Riot Act, if there be a riot at any of them.' It was obvious, therefore, that these great lawyers had not much confidence in their own opinions; and their hesitation was justified by the conduct of the judge (Mr. Justice Bayley), who, with admirable impartiality, subsequently tried the case. So far from laying down the law as Lord Eldon had interpreted it, he had the good sense to leave it to the jury to determine 'whether a body assembling in such numbers as to excite terror in the public mind was not illegal.' The question, in short, commended itself to Mr. Justice Bayley as one, not of law, but of fact. The legality of a meeting, which the magistrates took upon themselves to disperse with military force, was ultimately referred to the decision

of a jury.[1] For the moment, however, the opinions of Lord Eldon and Redesdale prevailed with the Cabinet, or rather with the moiety of the Cabinet who were not pleasure-seeking abroad. Within three days of the Lancashire meeting the ministry received the Prince Regent's commands to convey 'his approbation and high commendation of the conduct of the magistrates and civil authorities at Manchester, as well as of the officers and troops, both regular and Yeomanry cavalry, whose firmness and effectual support of the civil power preserved the peace of the town upon that most critical occasion.' The Regent was at that time at Christchurch; his approval was dated the 19th of August. There were then no telegraphs, no railways. The news of the meeting on the 16th reached the ministers in London on the evening of the 17th. Two of the Lancashire magistrates themselves arrived in London in the course of the 18th. The despatch which the Regent was able to sign in his yacht off Christchurch on the 19th must have left London late on the 18th or in the small hours of the morning of the 19th. Those members of the Cabinet, who happened to be in town, could not have given themselves four-and-twenty hours' consideration before they committed themselves to a hasty approval of the conduct both of the magistracy and of the troops.[2]

The Ministry, having irretrievably committed themselves to the side of the magistracy, desired that all the evidence, on which their opinion ought to have been formed, should be sent to them to London. When the evidence was received they discovered, much to Lord Eldon's annoyance, that it did not warrant a prosecution for high treason; and they were compelled to withdraw the charge and indict the prisoners for a conspiracy to alter the law by force and by threats. The Lancashire

[1] Eldon, vol. ii. p. 337. Sidmouth, vol. iii. p. 278. *Ann. Reg.*, 1820, Chron., p. 858.

[2] Sidmouth, vol. iii. p. 299.

CHAP. V. 1819.

magistrates committed them for trial at the Lancaster assizes on this charge, but the trial was subsequently postponed to York, and did not take place till the following year. Hunt and his associates were then convicted, and were subsequently sentenced to various terms of imprisonment.[1]

The Ministry had been partially justified by the committal of Hunt and his confederates for trial. They had also been encouraged by the verdicts of the juries summoned to inquire into the causes of the death of the unfortunate persons who had lost their lives in the riot. None of these verdicts were such as could lead to judicial proceedings. Some were 'Accidental death;' another, on a child, 'Died by a fall from his mother's arms;' a third, 'Died by the pressure of the military, being under the civil power.' The magistrates of Lancashire and Cheshire thought proper, too, 'to return thanks to the commanders, officers, and men of all the corps who had taken part in the actions of the day; particularly expressing their gratification at the "extreme forbearance exercised by the Yeomanry, when insulted and defied by the rioters."'[2]

General indignation at the conduct of the ministry.

But the position of the Ministry was by no means enviable. Though their proceedings had been approved by the magistrates of the neighbourhood, the circumstances of the meeting, or of the massacre, as it began to be called, excited deep attention. Subscriptions were opened in London and Liverpool for the purpose of relieving the

[1] *Ann. Reg.*, 1820, Chron., p. 898. Sidmouth, vol. iii. p. 265.

Political agitators of the present day may care to know the penalty attached to such offences half a century ago. Hunt was sentenced to two and a half years' imprisonment, and had at the expiration of that time to find sureties (himself for 1,000*l.*, two other persons for 500*l.* each) for good behaviour for five years. Sir Charles Wolseley had eighteen months' imprisonment, and to give the same sureties as Hunt. Mr. Harrison had also eighteen months' imprisonment; Johnston, Healy, and Bamford, one year's imprisonment. Each of the last four had to find sureties for their good behaviour for five years, themselves for 200*l.*, and two other persons in 100*l.* each.—*Ann. Reg.*, 1820, Chron., p. 148.

[2] *Ann. Reg.*, 1819, Hist., p. 107.

sufferings of the wounded, and of obtaining legal redress against their persecutors. Several individuals of the Manchester Yeomanry were indicted for cutting and maiming with intent to kill; and, though the grand jury of Lancashire threw out the bills, the public regarded the Lancashire grand jury as an interested and therefore partial tribunal. Their presentment proved that the conduct of the magistrates was open to question. Far more formidable proceedings were, however, imminent. The Common Council of London met on the 9th of September for the express purpose of 'considering the late transactions at Manchester.' The Common Council, by seventy-one votes to forty-five, agreed to a series of resolutions affirming the legality of the Manchester meeting, and expressing their strongest indignation at the 'unprovoked and intemperate proceedings' of the magistrates and the military, which they regarded as 'highly disgraceful to the character of Englishmen, and a daring violation of the British Constitution.'[1] It is the privilege of the Common Council of London to have unrestricted access to the throne; and an address in accordance with the resolutions was accordingly presented to the Regent. The Regent was advised to reply in terms of angry remonstrance; but his remonstrances did not check the impulse which the address had given. A meeting of the inhabitants of Norwich, held under the authority of the mayor, requested the Regent 'to dismiss for ever from his councils those ministers with whom the name of his Royal Highness had been connected with the massacre at Manchester.' In Westminster, York, Bristol, Liverpool, Nottingham, and other towns similar meetings were held. The suppression of one meeting by force had led to the holding of many others.

Far the most important of these meetings, both in its circumstances and its consequences, was held, on the 14th of October, in Yorkshire. Yorkshire was the most im-

[1] *Ann. Reg.*, 1819, Hist., p. 110.

CHAP. V. 1819.

portant county in all England. 'Yorkshire and Middlesex between them make all England,' was the saying of Fox.[1] The Lord Lieutenant, Lord Fitzwilliam, was one of the wealthiest noblemen in the country and one of the leading members of the Whig party. Yet Lord Fitzwilliam, as Lord Lieutenant of the West Riding, signed a requisition to the High Sheriff for a meeting at York to consider the Manchester proceedings. The meeting was held, and attended by 20,000 persons. The resolutions passed at it demanded an inquiry into the occurrences at Peterloo, but refrained from expressing any positive opinion on the conduct either of the magistrates or of the ministers. The importance of the meeting consisted, however, in the fact that it was attended by Lord Fitzwilliam. Lord Fitzwilliam's example was followed in other counties; and meetings to consider the Manchester proceedings were hastily convened by the Whig party. The Whigs, indeed, at once determined to endeavour to take the matter out of the hands of the Radicals, and to direct and moderate the popular voice themselves. Without desiring to associate themselves with the views and proceedings of Hunt, they were anxious to resist the inroads, which they believed the Government to be making, on the privileges of the public.

The Ministry were more alarmed at Lord Fitzwilliam's action than at all the blood which had been shed at Peterloo. At the end of September they had hesitated to summon Parliament together. Before October was ten days old they had convened it for the 23rd of November. But they did not wait for the assembly of Parliament to mark their displeasure of Lord Fitzwilliam's conduct. A week after the meeting at York a messenger was sent to Wentworth 'with a letter informing Lord Fitzwilliam that the Prince Regent had no further occasion for his services as Lord Lieutenant of the West Riding of York-

[1] Wilberforce, vol. ii. p. 133.

shire.' Two days afterwards the vacant Lieutenancy was conferred on Lord Lascelles, the eldest son of Lord Harewood, a nobleman whose position and estates were almost equal to those of Lord Fitzwilliam.

Lord Fitzwilliam's removal from the Lord Lieutenancy.

The removal of Lord Fitzwilliam from the Lord Lieutenancy of the West Riding was an act of vigour which excited mingled surprise and alarm. Associating it with the immediate assembly of Parliament, the Whigs inferred, or professed to infer, from it an attempt on the part of the ministry to control the privileges of the country. 'I have little doubt,' wrote Brougham to Lord Grey, 'that they seriously and desperately intend to change the Government into one less free. I should say they did so if they passed laws restricting meetings and the press.' Nor was Brougham mistaken in his shrewd anticipation. 'We are in a state,' wrote Lord Eldon to his brother, 'in which the country must make new laws to meet this new state of things.' 'The laws are not strong enough for the times,' wrote Lord Sidmouth; 'but they must be made so, if it were meant to afford the country a reasonable hope of permanent tranquillity.'[1]

Divisions among the Opposition.

The ministry were then resolute on obtaining stringent powers of repression. Nothing could have diverted them from their task but a strong and united Opposition; and unfortunately the Opposition was neither strong nor united. 'The Radicals,' wrote Brougham, 'have made themselves so odious that a number even of our own way of thinking would be well enough pleased to see them and their vile press put down at all hazards.' The more liberal element among the Opposition were far from unanimous in their desire to resist the Ministry. But the less liberal element among them were even more anxious than Lord Sidmouth and Lord Eldon for repressive laws. Lord Grenville had been one of Pitt's principal

[1] Brougham, vol. ii. p. 348. Eldon, vol. ii. p. 340. Sidmouth, vol. iii. p. 249.

CHAP. V. 1819

colleagues in the closing decade of the eighteenth century. He had heartily approved the repressive measures into which Pitt had been driven by the French Revolution; and he failed to see any remedy for the existing discontent short of the repetition of similar treatment. Ten days before Parliament met he forwarded to Lord Liverpool a memorandum of the measures which he thought necessary for the crisis, and assured the minister that his views were confirmed by the general concurrence of the very few intimate friends with whom he had communicated on the occasion.[1] Lord Buckingham thoroughly agreed with Lord Grenville's views. The whole of this section of the Opposition, therefore, stood aloof from their usual friends, and clamoured for legislation at least as strong as that which the ministry itself was forcing upon Parliament.

'The Six Acts.'

The measures on which the ministers resolved, and which were ultimately carried, are commonly known in history as 'the Six Acts.' As Lord Castlereagh was the leader of the House of Commons, and, in that capacity, was the most prominent member of the administration, they are occasionally styled 'Lord Castlereagh's Six Acts.' The Acts themselves have all been included in one general indictment; but they differed from each other in their character and in their object. Some of them were measures to which no real objection ought to have been made; others of them were laws which ought never to have been passed. The stronger and more objectionable proposals naturally arrested the attention of the public; and the milder bills, which were simultaneously introduced, became offensive from the company in which they made their appearance. 'I see on the part of the Government,' said Tierney in the House of Commons, 'an evident determination to resort to nothing but force: they think of nothing else; they dream of nothing else; they will try no means of conciliation; they will make no attempt to

[1] Liverpool, vol. ii. p. 418.

pacify and reconcile; force—force—force—and nothing but force.'[1]

Yet at the very head of the Six Acts stood a measure obviously necessary, and which in reality interfered in no way with the freedom of the country. The men who had attended the Manchester meeting had undoubtedly been drilled. The friends of the Radicals insisted, indeed, that they had never been armed with a weapon more offensive than a common walking-stick, and that the object of the drilling was to enable them to move to the place of meeting with some degree of precision. But the Government and its military advisers of course replied that military drill was not necessary for the purposes of a peaceful meeting; and that the drillings of the population which were undoubtedly going on were a dangerous symptom of the times. The military power of every state must necessarily rest in the hands of the duly constituted authorities; and the authorities cannot safely permit military organisations over which they have no control to rise up in their midst. The Ministry of Lord Liverpool decided, therefore, to prohibit unauthorised persons practising military exercises. This, however, was only one of the Six Acts. The second of them was due to another circumstance. Hunt and his associates had been committed for trial to the next Lancaster assizes. Had they been indicted, as the Ministry originally intended, for treason, their trial must necessarily have taken place immediately. 'But,' wrote Lord Grenville,[2] 'an indictment found for a conspiracy to overthrow the Government by force may be traversed by the defendant, like the smallest misdemeanour. That traverse adjourns the case from July to April; the prisoner is then released on bail, and it will be little less than nine months from the date of the accusation that the king and the prisoner

[1] *Ann. Reg.*, 1819, Hist., p. 131.
[2] Liverpool, vol. ii. p. 423.

CHAP. V. 1819.

will have justice done to them upon it. Such a course of judicial proceeding may operate for vengeance, it can never operate to prevention.'

Such was Lord Grenville's opinion on the eve of Parliament assembling. There was evidently a great deal of good sense contained in it, and the ministers accordingly readily fell in with his suggestion. The result was very memorable. Lord Holland occupied a peculiar position in the ranks of the Whig party. The nephew of Fox, he had an hereditary claim to the allegiance of the Whigs. His undoubted abilities had placed him in the very front rank of the chieftains of his party; while his admirable social qualities had enabled him to gather all the foremost and all the rising men of the day round the table of Holland House. Lord Holland had the tact to see that the bill of the Government might be made useful for another purpose. The Attorney-General had at that time the power to lodge an *ex officio* information against an accused person without taking any immediate proceedings to bring him to trial. 'There were at present,' said Lord Holland, 'forty informations depending, some of which had been hanging over the parties accused for one, two, three, four, five, and for ten years.' Lord Holland, therefore, pressed the Government to add a clause to their bill enabling the defendant against whom an *ex officio* information had been lodged to compel the Attorney-General to bring on the case within a year, or to abandon the prosecution. Lord Eldon, on consideration, assented to Lord Holland's suggestion; and the bill, with this addition, became law.[1]

Two out of 'the Six Acts,' then, do not deserve to be remembered with any feelings of asperity. The Traversing Bill, in its ultimate shape, was a beneficial reform; the Military Training Bill has remained the law of the land

[1] *Hansard*, vol. xli. p. 1008. *Ann. Reg.*, 1819, Hist., p. 127. Eldon, vol. ii. p. 349.

to the present day. But the other four Acts were of a very different character. The first of these four authorised the magistrates in certain counties to issue warrants to search for arms; the second of them authorised the seizure of seditious and blasphemous libels; and made transportation the punishment for a second conviction for libel. The third regulated and restricted the right of public meeting; and the fourth subjected all publications below a certain size to the stamp duty on newspapers. The first and third of these four were proposed as temporary measures; the second and fourth of them as permanent Acts.

The Seizure of Arms Bill was almost forced on the Government by the follies of the Radicals themselves. Watson, who had been concerned in the Spa Fields riot, had the folly to boast at a Smithfield meeting that there were 800,000 Radicals armed.[1] The foolish boast intensified the fears which agitated the breasts of the upper classes. Lord Darlington solemnly declared in the House of Lords that he had received intelligence that preparations were being made in the North of England for a rising in arms. Lord Strathmore confirmed Lord Darlington's intelligence; and even Lord Grey admitted the crisis to be serious. Amidst the universal terror which these utterances inspired the Arms Bill rapidly made way. A proposal to confine the right of search to the daytime was rejected by a large majority, and the bill became law in its original form.[2]

The bill to prevent seditious and blasphemous libels created more opposition than the Arms Bill. Libels, indeed, of a seditious and blasphemous nature were being scattered broadcast through the country; the Government, moreover, had signally failed in its prosecution of Hone. But neither the increased circulation of seditious libels

[1] Plumer Ward, vol. ii. p. 37.

[2] *Hansard*, vol. xli. pp. 591–594, 1124–1163. *Ann. Reg.*, 1819, Hist., pp. 138–143.

CHAP. V. 1819.

nor the failure of certain prosecutions justified the inference that the law was not sufficiently strong. Severe punishments do not increase but lessen the prospect of convictions, and a jury disposed to acquit a prisoner under a mild law is unlikely to convict him under a harsh one. The Seditious Libels Bill was divisible into two parts. In the first place, when a bookseller had been convicted of selling a libellous book, the bill authorised the seizure of the entire work. The court might be moved for an arrest of judgment; its decision might ultimately prove in the bookseller's favour; yet the publication of the work during the interval might be stopped. In the next place, the bill made banishment or transportation the punishment of a second conviction for libel. Exception was, of course, taken to the provision. 'The offence of publishing a libel,' it was urged, 'is, more than any other that is known to our law, undefined and uncertain. Publications which at one time may be considered innocent and even laudable may at another be thought deserving punishment. Thus the author and publisher of any writing dictated by the purest intentions, on a matter of public interest, without any example to warn, any definition to instruct, or any authority to guide him, may expose himself to the penalty of being banished from the United Kingdom and all other parts of His Majesty's dominions for such time as the court shall order, or be transported to such place as shall be appointed by His Majesty for the transportation of offenders for any term not exceeding seven years.'[1]

The feeling which the bill provoked proved so strong that the Government found themselves compelled partially to give way. They consented to withdraw the punishment of transportation from the bill, and to be satisfied with banishment alone. The concession did not remove the objections which the Opposition felt to the measure,

[1] See the protest of the Lords, *Hansard*, vol. xli. p. 747.

but it facilitated its passage through the House of Commons. No one could defend the publications which the Radicals were disseminating. All respectable people would have welcomed the punishment of their authors; and the excesses of a few men, who endeavoured to associate themselves with the cause of freedom, unfortunately afforded the Ministry an excuse for interfering with the liberty of the printing press.[1] The measure, however, which thus became law, proved utterly useless. The Ministry did not dare to enforce its provisions. Ten years afterwards it was repealed, but its repeal was as formal a matter as its enactment. 'It was already dead.'[2]

There was perhaps less objection in principle to the imposition of a stamp duty on all small pamphlets than to the severe punishments enacted in the Seditious and Blasphemous Libels Bill. Newspapers were already taxed; but the cheaper broadsheets, circulating among the poorer classes, succeeded in evading the definition of a newspaper and in escaping the tax. Cobbett was consequently able to sell the 'Register' for twopence. Parliament was, therefore, asked to declare that these periodicals should be subject to the tax which every newspaper paid. The Ministry at the same time insisted that every bookseller, before commencing his business, should enter into recognisances for his good behaviour. It was, indeed, objected by the Opposition that it was a primary principle of the English Constitution that an Englishman might publish whatever he pleased on his own responsibility; and that the privileges of the people were infringed by an enactment which required the publisher in the first instance to enter into recognisances. But the Opposition were only able to state

[1] *Ann. Reg.*, 1819, Hist., pp. 143–150.

[2] See Macaulay's speech on the 10th of October, 1831. *Hansard*, 3rd series, vol. viii. p. 396.

CHAP. V.

1819.

these arguments; they were wholly powerless to enforce them. The bill became law.[1]

The most stringent of the Six Acts, however, was that which regulated and restricted the right of public meeting. The provisions of the measure introduced by the Government were concisely explained by Lord Liverpool in a letter to Lord Grenville:—Meetings of counties called by the lord lieutenant or sheriff; meetings of corporate towns called by the mayor or other first magistrate; meetings called by five or more justices of the peace were excepted from it. But, with these exceptions, 'all meetings for the consideration of grievances in Church and State, or for the purpose of preparing petitions, &c., except in the parishes (or townships, where parishes are divided into townships) where the individuals usually reside,' were prohibited. No person was allowed to attend such meetings unless he was an actual resident within such parish or township; while, to prevent simultaneous meetings, it was further decided that 'previous notice must be given of the day when such meetings are to be held by seven inhabitants to a neighbouring magistrate,' who was allowed discretionary power to put off the meeting. Persons coming armed and persons carrying banners were also prohibited from attending such meetings at all.[2]

The object of these proposals was plain. None but the upper classes were to be allowed to organise large meetings. The lower classes were to be permitted only to attend meetings in their own parishes; and itinerant orators, who would of course be strangers, were to be excluded from them. The right of meeting was to be nominally preserved, but it was to be continued in a shape which made its preservation valueless. 'Parochial meetings,' said Lord Liverpool, 'would generally be flat;' and

[1] *Ann. Reg.*, 1819, Hist., pp. 158–163. Cf. *Hansard*, 3rd series, vol. vi. p. 10.

[2] Liverpool, vol. ii. p. 433.

the Ministry had sufficient courage to face a 'flat' demonstration. In 1819, moreover, the measure had an additional significance. Nearly every large town in the country is now corporate; and the chief magistrate of nearly every large town would consequently be competent to convene a meeting. But in 1819 'Manchester, Birmingham, Sheffield, Wolverhampton, and other wealthy and populous towns' were unincorporate, and were therefore 'excluded from the advantages reserved for other decayed and comparatively unimportant places.'[1] Manchester and Birmingham, therefore, already denied direct Parliamentary representation, were thus deprived of the only means which they still enjoyed of securing attention to their wishes. A measure which limited the right of meeting necessarily aroused considerable opposition; but the Opposition in Parliament was powerless to effect any change in the policy of the ministry. The whole Tory party was clamouring for decisive measures; the Grenvilleites, with Lord Grenville and Lord Buckingham at their head, were seconding the Tories; and the remainder of the Opposition were unable to do more than limit the duration of the Bill to a period of five years. The session of the Six Acts closed at Christmas, the ministry having substantially carried all their proposals.

Death of the king.

The measures of the ministry, however reprehensible they may seem in other respects, had one justification: they were successful. The firmness of the authorities checked the disorders which were everywhere menacing and convinced the leaders of the Radicals, or those of them who were still at large, that it was impossible to pursue their designs against the Government. The sullen tranquillity into which the country in consequence lapsed was simultaneously cheered by a slight improvement in its trade. The working classes at the same time experienced the advantages of an increased demand for

[1] *Ann. Reg.*, 1819, Hist., p. 154.

CHAP. V. 1820.

their labour, and of a reduction in the price of the grain which constituted their chief food. Quiet seemed likely to be restored; and the interest which the Peterloo meeting had occasioned was forgotten amidst the excitement occasioned by a new event. The old king—a king only in name—had at last died. His death had elevated the Regent to the throne; and political gossips speculated on the consequences which would ensue from the change. It will be the object of the next chapter to trace the history of the miserable proceedings which followed the accession of George IV. to the throne. In the present chapter it is sufficient to state that the death of the king necessitated the early dissolution of Parliament. On the 28th of February Parliament was prorogued to the 13th of March, and almost immediately afterwards it was dissolved.

The Cato Street conspiracy.

Five days before the prorogation an event occurred which filled men's minds with horror, and did more than all the arguments of the Tories to reconcile them to the severe measures of the Government. Among the more prominent leaders of the Radical party was one Arthur Thistlewood. Thistlewood was a native of Horncastle, in Lincolnshire, and was born in the year 1770. His father was a land steward, and Thistlewood was himself educated for his father's profession. At the age of twenty-one, however, he accepted a lieutenancy in a Militia regiment, and soon afterwards, marrying a young lady of the name of Bruce, possessed of property amounting to 300*l.* a year, he exchanged his lieutenancy in the Militia for a commission in a marching regiment. He went with his regiment to the West Indies, where he threw up his profession and proceeded to America. From America he sailed for France, where he arrived after the fall of Robespierre. There 'he became initiated in all the doctrines and sentiments of the French Revolutionists;' and, imbued with these views, returned to

England after the Peace of Amiens. He soon became acquainted with the leaders of the Radical party, and was admitted to their councils. He was one of the leaders of the mob who were chiefly responsible for the Spa Fields riot in 1817; and, though the charge against him on that occasion was abandoned after the elder Watson's acquittal, he was arrested in the following year under the provisions of the Habeas Corpus Suspension Act. On his release from prison he had the impudence to send a challenge to Lord Sidmouth, the Home Secretary, to fight him with sword or pistol. The Cabinet decided on regarding the challenge as an offence against themselves, and prevailed on Lord Sidmouth, against his better judgment, to direct a prosecution against Thistlewood. Thistlewood was convicted; and on the 28th of May, 1818, was sentenced to a year's imprisonment in Horsham Gaol. His year's imprisonment expired at a critical period. Birmingham was on the eve of electing Sir Charles Wolseley its legislatorial attorney. Preparations were being made for the Manchester meeting, and Thistlewood at once joined his old associates. After the lamentable events which occurred at Manchester he issued a document in which he 'unequivocally asserted that there is no law to prevent 10,000, 100,000, or even 1,000,000 men assembling; that no magistrate can touch them till they have struck some blow; and that it is immaterial whether they come in military order or civil array, with or without flags or arms.' This document was referred to by Lord Castlereagh in the House of Commons as one of the main reasons which necessitated the regulation and restriction of public meetings. The passing of the Seditious Meetings Bill disconcerted Thistlewood's views. The course of agitation on which the Radicals had resolved became impossible; and some sanguinary measures, almost incredible from their rashness and their wickedness, were decided on. Thistlewood, and a few of his associates,

CHAP. V. 1820.

decided on striking a great blow against the Government. They determined to attempt the assassination of the entire Cabinet; to seize a few pieces of artillery which happened to be in an unprotected state in London; to set fire to the Mansion House, the barracks, and two or three other places; and, amidst the general confusion which these deeds would create, to establish a provisional Government. Such was the plan deliberately propounded by a band of some thirty conspirators. They did not, probably, themselves believe in its success. The utmost that they could have hoped or expected was that the confusion and consternation, which the assassination of the Cabinet would create would afford them opportunities for plunder and for escape. Thistlewood's confederates were drawn from the lowest orders. Ings was a butcher, Brunt a journeyman shoemaker, Davidson a man of colour, Adams a retired soldier, Hidon a cowkeeper. The conspirators probably could not have collected 20*l.* among them, and yet these obscure individuals, without friends, without resources, seriously contemplated the brutal massacre of the entire Government.[1]

Thistlewood's original plan was laid with some caution. George III. had died at the close of January; the funeral was fixed for the 16th of February. It was known that a considerable number of troops would be withdrawn from London to attend the ceremony; and the conspirators accordingly hoped that the metropolis would be left in a comparatively defenceless condition, and that an opportunity would occur for their striking a formidable blow. No such opportunity was found. Saturday, the 19th of February, arrived, and nothing had been done. The slender resources of the conspirators were almost exhausted, and immediate action had become absolutely necessary. It was ascertained that the entire Cabinet were engaged to dine with Lord Harrowby on

[1] *Ann. Reg.*, 1820, Chron., pp. 63, 921. Sidmouth, vol. iii. pp. 208, 315.

the 23rd of February at what was then called a Cabinet Dinner. Lord Harrowby lived in Grosvenor Square; and the conspirators thought that a house easily approached and easily left, situate in a comparatively quiet neighbourhood, favoured their design. Fourteen bold men undertook to attack the house. One of them was to ring the bell, on pretence of presenting a note, and his associates were to rush in and secure the entrance. Hand-grenades were to be thrown in at the window; and the ministers who were not killed by the consequences of the explosion were to be assassinated, one by one, by the conspirators.

Such was the brutal conspiracy in which these reckless men engaged. Fortunately for the Government, rumours of what was going on had, for weeks previously, reached the Home Office. Among the friends with whom Thistlewood associated was one George Edwards. He was poor and penniless—'straw was his resting-place; his only covering a blanket.' Edwards was acquainted with the Radical Reformers, and entered into the plots of Thistlewood and his comrades. He was charged by Thistlewood and some of his accomplices with instigating their crime. It is certain that he communicated what he heard at their meetings to Lord Sidmouth. Edwards' testimony was corroborated by another of the conspirators. Hidon, the cowkeeper, called at Lord Harrowby's house, followed him to the Park, and communicated to him the details of the plot. The ministry, thus doubly forewarned, took measures to defeat the designs of the conspirators. It was ascertained that they were to meet in a loft in Cato Street,[1] a small mews running parallel with the Edgeware Road. Warrants were immediately granted for their apprehension. A body of Bow Street

[1] Cato Street no longer exists under that name. It ran into John Street, a street on the east side of the Edgeware Road.

CHAP. V. 1820.

officers were appointed to make the arrest, and a detachment of troops was ordered to support them. These simple orders, however, were very imperfectly obeyed. The troops were late, and the police officers attempted to make the arrest alone. They forced themselves up a narrow ladder into the loft in which Thistlewood and his accomplices were sitting, and called on them to surrender. A scuffle ensued; one of the Bow Street officers, Smithers, was stabbed to the heart, three others were wounded; and the conspirators succeeded in forcing their way into the yard. The opportune arrival of a small body of troops facilitated the arrest of nine of the conspirators; but about twelve others, including Thistlewood and Brunt, effected their escape.

Thistlewood had succeeded in temporarily effecting his escape, but he was apprehended on the following morning in his lodgings in Moorfields. His principal accomplices were seized about the same time in other places; and a special commission was appointed for the trial of the prisoners. The trials commenced on Monday the 17th of April. After a two days' trial Thistlewood was found guilty of compassing and levying war against the king; Ings, Brunt, Tidd, and Davidson were separately convicted of the same offences. Adams turned king's evidence. The other prisoners subsequently withdrew their original pleas and admitted their guilt. The admission saved their lives. Adams's evidence made the guilt of all the parties plain. The prisoners were all sentenced to death; and on the 1st of May, Thistlewood, Ings, Brunt, Tidd, and Davidson were hanged, and afterwards decapitated. No disorder occurred among the vast crowd which assembled to witness their execution. The miserable men had no accomplices at large to attempt their rescue. One of the foulest and most contemptible conspiracies that was

ever planned expired with the execution of the five ringleaders.[1] CHAP. V. 1820.

The minor actors in the plot never again emerged from their previous obscurity. Edwards, indicted for treason by the relatives of the executed malefactors, hurriedly left the country. Hidon, the cowkeeper, was rewarded with a hackney carriage license. Mrs. Smithers, the widow of the murdered Bow Street officer, received a pension of a hundred a year.[2] But the plot itself effected a very different result from that which its originators had contemplated. The moderate statesmen of the day had previously doubted the propriety of the repressive measures which the Government had induced Parliament to sanction. The horrible details of the Cato Street conspiracy seemed to afford the desired justification for severe laws. All England rang with astonishment and horror; and every argument for moderate measures was hushed amidst the universal indignation of the country. Arbitrary government had won its greatest triumph through the almost inconceivable wickedness of a few obscure conspirators.

Before, indeed, the trials of Thistlewood and his associates had taken place, another series of events in Scotland had increased the consternation which universally prevailed. On Sunday, the 2nd of April, a proclamation was found affixed to the walls in different parts of Glasgow and the neighbourhood calling upon 'the people of England, Scotland and Ireland, to come forward and effect a revolution by force.' It exhorted the soldiers to keep in mind the glorious example of the Spanish troops. It recommended the proprietors of large manufactories The Glasgow riot.

[1] The trial of Thistlewood will be found in *State Trials*, vol. xxxiii. p. 681; that of Ings on p. 957; that of Hunt on p. 1177; and that of Davidson and Tidd on p. 1337 of the same volume. There is an excellent summary of the proceedings in the 62nd volume of the *Annual Register*, Chron., p. 921.

[2] Sidmouth, vol. iii. p. 317. *Ann. Reg.*, 1820, Chron., p. 60.

CHAP. V. 1820.

to suspend their operations till public order should be restored. It commanded all persons to desist from labour from that day forward; and it denounced as enemies to the king and traitors to the country all who should be found in arms against the intended regenerators of their native land.

The anonymous placard, in the first instance, fulfilled its intended object. The morning of Monday broke, and Glasgow wore an extraordinary aspect. The labouring men of the city resumed their usual work; but they were almost immediately the objects of threatening visits, and were compelled to desist from it. The streets were filled with a crowd wandering about in enforced idleness; and the business of the second city in the kingdom was suspended at the dictate of an anonymous authority, whom no one could identify, and whose power or whose weakness no one knew. The magistrates hastily collected as large a military force as they were able to gather together. The Volunteer corps were called out; a few regular troops were marched into the city; and the population were warned by a proclamation against the designs of the disaffected. The counter proclamation of the magistrates immediately answered every purpose. The power of the agitators had consisted in the terror which their proceedings had inspired; their power ceased the moment that it was seen that the authorities were not afraid of them. The well-disposed resumed their ordinary occupations. With one solitary exception the ill-disposed concealed themselves. One of the Stirlingshire Yeomanry accidentally discovered an armed body of Radicals on the road between Kilsyth and Falkirk, and reported his discovery to his commanding officer. Eleven cavalry soldiers and eleven of the Yeomanry were detached to scour the road, and they succeeded in driving the rebels to some high ground called Bonnymuir, where they sheltered themselves behind a wall. The troops,

after calling on the Radicals to surrender, succeeded in turning their flank, when one-half of them immediately ran away. Those who remained offered a stout resistance; one of the cavalry soldiers was killed, and three of the troop-horses were wounded. But the rebels were completely dispersed; nineteen of them were made prisoners; many of them were severely wounded. 'The whole Radical plot,' as Sir W. Scott expressed it, 'went to the devil when it came to gun and sword.' 'No other attempt at open resistance was made; and the failure of this extravagant rising served at once to open the eyes of the deluded and to crush the hopes of the deluders.'[1]

The failure of this miserable outbreak, and the subsequent execution of the Cato Street conspirators, mark the termination of one of the unhappiest periods of English history. During the five years which had succeeded the conclusion of the war, society in England had been passing through an unprecedented crisis. Unexampled distress had led to almost universal discontent; and the poorer classes, crushed beneath their present misfortune, had listened to the treacherous advice of unprincipled agitators, and had been induced to perpetrate outrages of the most reprehensible character. The upper classes, instead of examining the grievances of which their poorer fellow-citizens complained, saw in every fresh disorder new reasons for repressive legislation of the severest character. The Habeas Corpus Act was suspended; the right of public meeting was restricted; the freedom of the press was limited; the right to possess arms was denied; and the elective franchise was rigidly confined to the few fortunate persons who happened to enjoy it. The result of these measures was, in one sense, successful. The Ministry succeeded for the moment in repressing the designs of the populace, and in stamping out the disorders which desolated the land. The country

[1] *Ann. Reg.*, 1820, Hist., p. 39. Lockhart's *Scott*, p. 430.

CHAP. V. 1820.

became quiet; but the quiet was the calm of the flood which for a moment is arrested by a barrier it is unable to overwhelm. The increasing weight of the gathering waters sweeps away at last the obstacle to their progress. The increasing power of the agitated populace swept away in the end the feeble barriers of the governing classes. The penning-up the waters only increases the ultimate violence of the flood. The postponement of reform in 1820 made the revolution more serious when it became irresistible in 1832.

For the moment, however, the country had been crushed into peace; but events of a startling and unexpected character gave a new turn to men's thoughts, and the wrongs of a queen induced a fickle populace to forget for a time their own grievances. The increasing liberality of the age made some concessions necessary, and the growing weakness of the Government compelled it to concede some reforms. From these various causes the history of the country assumed a new phase. Years were still to elapse before political reform was conceded by Parliament. But the era of repressive legislation, sweetened by no concessions, was gone for ever.

CHAPTER VI.

CHAP. VI. 1816.

The Princess Charlotte.

It is difficult at the present time to realise the solitary life which in 1816 was the lot of the princess who was the presumptive heiress to the throne of England. Her father, vexed at her refusal to marry the Prince of Orange, was subjecting her to unusual and unmerited restraints. Her mother, on whose affection she had hitherto relied, had abandoned the country where she had experienced so much unhappiness. Her grandfather, who in previous years had interposed in her behalf, was hopelessly insane; and her warm, impulsive disposition instinctively recoiled from the prim decorum which characterised her grandmother, the queen. With her mother's family she had no acquaintance; and the head of it, 'Brunswick's ill-fated chieftain,' had just died a soldier's death in the last campaign. Though the princess was nearly twenty years old, the Regent, annoyed with her conduct, refused her access to her most intimate acquaintances. She was only permitted to write to her warmest friend on condition that her letters passed through the hands of a lady-in-waiting. There seems even reason to think that her allowance was stopped, and that she had literally 'no money of her own to spend on anything.' Moved from Windsor to Weymouth, from Weymouth to London, from London to Weymouth, with little society and few amusements, the unhappy girl pined, grew thin, and slept badly. 'It makes me sad to think,' she wrote, 'of the time past or the time to come: I don't know which is most painful, the past or the future.'[1]

[1] Lady Rose Weigall's *Memoir of Princess Charlotte*, p. 148.

CHAP. VI.

1816.

A better time, however, was speedily coming. A few years before, during the period of her engagement to the Prince of Orange, she had accidentally met, at Carlton House, Prince Leopold, the youngest of the three sons of the Duke of Saxe Cobourg. The prince had been 'pointed out to her as a supposed admirer of a young lady of her acquaintance, and she' had 'expressed her wonder, as he was so handsome, that the young lady did not seem more flattered by his attentions.'[1] The princess's casual remark was, some time afterwards, repeated to the prince, and Leopold was consequently induced, after a decent interval, to pay his court to the heiress presumptive of the crown of England. The Regent was probably weary of the contest with his daughter. Prince Leopold had favourably impressed the people whom he had met on his previous visit to England; and it was the interest of all classes that 'the fair-haired daughter of the isles'[2] should marry. They all 'fondly dreamed,' with Byron, 'our children should obey her child.' Under these circumstances the negotiations for the marriage were rapidly brought to a successful issue. Parliament voted 60,000*l.* for the princess's outfit, and 60,000*l.* a year for her sustenance. Claremont, the beautiful seat of Mr. Ellis, was purchased for her residence; and, late after dinner on the 2nd of May, in accordance with the singular custom of the time, the Princess Charlotte was duly married, in the drawing-room of Carlton House, to Prince Leopold of Saxe Cobourg.

Her married life and death.

The remainder of Princess Charlotte's short life was spent in the happy society of her husband at Claremont. Admirably suited to each other, she loving him with all the force of her impulsive temperament, he gently checking the buoyancy of her spirits when they led her to exceed the 'limits of dignity or prudence,' the prince

[1] Lady Rose Weigall's memoir, p. 133.
[2] *Childe Harold*, Canto iv. st. 170.

and princess seem to have passed the happiest and the most domestic of lives. For a little more than a year nothing interrupted the even tenour of their days. The public heard with satisfaction of the life which she, whom they regarded as their future queen, was leading; and looked forward to the rule of another court, presided over by another Charlotte, blessed with all the virtues which had distinguished the wife of George III., but free from Queen Charlotte's prim and frigid manners. Still greater hopes began to be formed. In the autumn of 1817 it was known that the princess was expecting her confinement. In October Dr. Bailey and Sir R. Croft, her medical advisers, were established in the House. On the 5th of November she was delivered, after a very severe and protracted illness, of a dead boy.[1] 'She was too prostrate to realise the bitter disappointment. Yet even then she thought of her husband's sorrow, and sought to mitigate it by declaring herself the happiest wife in England. She only lived five hours longer.'[2]

1817.

The untimely death of the Princess Charlotte occasioned perhaps more general grief than any other public event in the present century. The nation had sympathised with the princess's sorrows, had sided with her in her troubles, had rejoiced at her marriage, and had heard with pleasure and satisfaction of her quiet domestic life at Claremont. The Regent was deservedly unpopular. His brothers were dissolute and extravagant. Surrounded by natural children, they had no heir among them; and the Princess Charlotte was, therefore, both the pride and the hope of the entire nation.

[1] The public were, at the time, disposed to blame the doctors. It does not seem, however, that they were to blame, except that they were too sanguine. Sir R. Croft shortly afterwards destroyed himself; but there was no evidence to show that this unhappy act was attributable to the princess's death. It may be doubted whether, in any similar period of our history, four such distinguished men as Whitbread, Romilly, Sir R. Croft, and Lord Castlereagh committed suicide.

[2] Lady Rose Weigall, p. 165.

CHAP. VI.

1817.

The consequences of her death.

Hark! forth from the abyss a voice proceeds,
A long low distant murmur of dread sound,
Such as arises when a nation bleeds
With some deep and immedicable wound.

. . . . . .

Scion of chiefs and monarchs, where art thou?
Fond hope of many nations, art thou dead?
Could not the grave forget thee, and lay low
Some less majestic, less beloved head?

Princess Charlotte's death was not, however, a mere source of sorrow to the multitude. It caused profound anxiety to statesmen. The Regent was married and separated from his wife. The Duke of York was married, but had no children. The Dukes of Clarence, Kent, and Cambridge were unmarried; the Duke of Sussex had contracted a marriage with Lady Augusta Murray which had been declared invalid; and, though the fifth brother, the Duke of Cumberland, had married in 1815, neither the circumstances of his marriage nor the previous lives of himself and his consort made it desirable that the crown should descend to one of his children. The wife whom the Duke of Cumberland had chosen was a daughter of the reigning Duke of Mecklenburg-Strelitz, and therefore niece to Queen Charlotte. She had been twice married; first to the Prince of Prussia, and second to the Prince Salms Branfels, from whom she had been divorced. The Duke of Cumberland's younger brother, the Duke of Cambridge, had formed an attachment for the lady, but had been persuaded to break off his engagement with her. The Duke of Cumberland, with extraordinary folly, which would perhaps have been excusable in a boy, but which was inexcusable in a man of the ripe age of forty-four years, selected as his wife the lady whom his brother had discarded. He was married to her first at Berlin, and afterwards, in deference to the opinion of the law officers, at Carlton House. The Regent and three of his brothers, the Dukes of York, Clarence, and Kent, at-

tended the ceremony. Queen Charlotte steadfastly refused either to attend the marriage or to receive the duchess. The opinion of the nation sided with the queen. The ministers proposed that an addition of 6,000*l.* a year should be made to the Duke of Cumberland's income; and the proposal gave rise to the most violent debate. One member 'appealed to the public voice for the truth of his assertion that of all the branches of the royal family the Duke of Cumberland was the one to whom the public feeling would be the least inclined to grant any pecuniary boon.' A second inquired whether the duke had rendered any services to his country which could entitle him to the grant; a third apprehended that the marriage was disagreeable to the royal family; a fourth asked whether it was true that the queen had declared that she would not receive the duchess at court, and whether she had not decidedly disapproved of a proposed marriage between the Princess of Salms and the Duke of Cambridge. A series of debates entailed a series of divisions, and a constant repetition of these damaging statements. The original motion for the grant was only carried by 87 votes to 70; the report was adopted by only 74 votes to 62. Leave to bring in a bill was granted by 75 votes to 62. The first reading was passed by 100 votes to 92; and finally the second reading was rejected by 126 votes to 125.[1]

The Duke of Cumberland had been foiled of the pecuniary advantage which he had perhaps reasonably expected to derive from his marriage. But there was one result of greater importance, which seemed imminent. The duchess, it was known, was expecting a child; and this child, after the Princess Charlotte, would, on the death of her royal uncles, be heir to the throne. The duchess was confined on the 11th of January, 1817. But her child, a girl, was born dead. Comparatively

[1] *Ann. Reg.*, 1815, Hist., p. 52.

CHAP. VI. 1818.

little attention was paid, at the time, to the fact. Its importance was only appreciated in the following November, when the Princess Charlotte died, and when it was recollected that the Duke of Cumberland and his wife were getting on in years, and that their prospect of a family was consequently declining.

There is a common saying that great crises create great men, and, in a sarcastic sense, the saying proved true of the royal family in 1818. While their niece had lived the royal princes, abandoned to their own selfish pleasures, had had no thought of marrying. But the death of their niece opened out to each of them a more ambitious prospect. Any one of them, it seemed possible, might have the honour of seeing one of his own children heir presumptive to the throne. The Duke of Clarence, George III.'s third son, hastily married Adelaide, sister to the Duke of Saxe-Meiningen. The Duke of Kent, George III.'s fourth son, married a Princess of Saxe Coburg—Victoria, the widow of the Prince of Leiningen; and George III.'s seventh son, the Duke of Cambridge, married Augusta, daughter of the Landgrave of Hesse Cassel. The death of one poor lady had induced the hasty marriages of three old uncles! The royal brides had not the merit of beauty. 'There was a grand display (at Carlton House) of all the royal duchesses,' wrote Fremantle to Lord Buckingham, 'one more ugly than another.'[1]

Marriages in the royal family.

But the Regent's conduct was more extraordinary than that of his brothers'. The death of their niece had induced them to take wives: the death of his daughter made the Regent try to get rid of his wife. On the first day of 1818, before his daughter had been dead eight weeks, he wrote to the Chancellor that he wished 'to extricate himself' from 'the cruellest, as well as the most unjust predicament that ever even the lowest individual,

[1] *Regency*, vol. ii. p. 267.

much more a prince, ever was placed in.'[1] The deliberations of the Cabinet on this letter resulted in events which neither the Regent nor they could have anticipated. The Cabinet were foolishly persuaded to send out a Commission to Italy, where the Princess of Wales was residing, to inquire into the life she was leading. The consequences of this action will be fully seen in the present chapter. Nor was this concession to the Regent the only act of folly which Lord Liverpool's Cabinet committed in 1818. The Regent's brothers had married for the sake of the country. They all of them desired to make a good thing out of their marriages. The Duke of Clarence wished to have his income of 20,500*l.* a year raised to 40,000*l.*[2] The Dukes of Kent and Cambridge desired to have their incomes raised from 18,000*l.* to 30,000*l.* a year; and they all proposed that in the first year of their marriage the additional grant should be doubled, in order that they might be able to bear the expense of an outfit. The Duke of Cumberland not unnaturally concluded that he in his turn should be put on the same footing as his other brothers. Lord Liverpool undertook to recommend these arrangements to the consideration of Parliament. But, before doing so, he

[1] Twiss's *Eldon*, vol. ii. p. 306.

[2] The curious in such matters will find an account of the gross incomes of these dukes in *Hansard*, vol. xxxviii. App. pp. l.–lii.; and *Ann. Reg.*, 1818, Chron. p. 62. The sums given in the text are the annuities charged on the Consolidated Fund. The Duke of Clarence, in addition, received 1,095*l.* as Admiral of the Fleet, and 187*l.* as Ranger of Bushey Park. The Duke of Kent, 6,517*l.* as Governor of Gibraltar, 613*l.* as Colonel of the Royal Scotch Regiment of Foot, and 73*l.* as Ranger of Hampton Court Little Park. The Duke of Cumberland had 1,008*l.* as Colonel of the 15th Hussars; and the Duke of Cambridge 882*l.* as Colonel of the Coldstream Guards. Each of the five brothers had had a present of 20,000*l.* out of the Admiralty Droits; and the Duke of Clarence had had a loan of 20,000*l.*, the Duke of Kent of 6,000*l.*, to be repaid by instalments. It appears that the instalments had been repaid very irregularly. It may perhaps be worth noting that the Duke of Clarence, soon after his marriage, had the generosity to provide, *at the expense of others*, for his illegitimate daughters. A pension of 2,500*l.* a year was granted to trustees in their favour on Sept. 9, 1818, out of the 4½ per cent. West India duties.—*Hansard*, New Series, vol. ix. p. 822. *Ann. Reg.*, 1820, Chron., p. 143.

CHAP. VI. 1818.

took the precaution of explaining them to a meeting of his own supporters. Nearly seventy of them assembled at Fife House, the residence of the Prime Minister; and to these seventy Lord Liverpool announced the marriages of the royal princes, and the arrangements which were in consequence in contemplation. The effect was magical. 'Nobody said a word, but everybody rose up and went away.' Disapprobation was never 'more strongly marked than by that silence.'[1] 'Some few mentioned their opinions privately to the minister.' The disapprobation was so strong that the minister was compelled to modify his terms.[2] Instead of 19,500*l.* he proposed only an additional 10,000*l.* for the Duke of Clarence. Instead of

[1] Bootle Wilbraham to Lord Colchester. Colchester, vol. iii. p. 43. *Hansard*, vol. xxxviii. p. 43.

[2] The amount which the royal family derived at that time from the public purse was as follows:—

	£	£
H.M.'s Household	898,000	
Ditto (by later Acts)	130,000	1,028,000
Prince of Wales		65,000
Princess of Wales		35,000
Duke of York	14,000, 12,000	26,000
Duchess of York		4,000
Duke of Clarence	12,000, 6,000, 2,500	20,500
Duke of Kent	12,000, 6,000	18,000
Duke of Cumberland	12,000, 6,000	18,000
Duke of Sussex	12,000, 6,000	18,000
Duke of Cambridge	12,000, 6,000	18,000
Duke of Gloucester		14,000
Princess Sophia of Gloucester		7,000
„ Augusta Sophia	9,000, 4,000	13,000
„ Elizabeth	9,000, 4,000	13,000
„ Mary	9,000, 4,000	13,000
„ Sophia	9,000, 4,000	13,000
In trust for Prince Leopold		50,000
Total		£1,373,000

—*Ann. Reg.*, pp. 398, 402.

12,000*l.* for the other brothers he proposed only an additional 6,000*l.* But even these modified terms were refused by Parliament. The Duke of Clarence was placed on the same footing as his other brothers, and was offered an additional 6,000*l.*, which, however, he declined to accept.[1] The Dukes of Cambridge and Kent had 6,000*l.* granted to them; but the additional 6,000*l.* to the Duke of Cumberland was refused. These arrangements, it was thought, were sufficiently liberal. The country was burdened with the cost which had been entailed on it by a tremendous war; misery and pauperism were visible in every village; and the policy which the Ministry proposed, and which Parliament fortunately rejected, was generally denounced as extravagant and inappropriate.[2]

The marriages in the royal family were on the whole attended with happy consequences. The Duke of Clarence had two daughters, both of whom, however, died in infancy. The Duchess of Kent had one daughter, whose admirable qualities were destined to repair the loss which the nation had sustained in the death of the Princess Charlotte; the Duchess of Cumberland had one son, who ultimately survived to become King of Hanover; and the Duchess of Cambridge had one son and two daughters, all of whom are still living. The marriages of the royal princes had thus effectually removed the apprehension that no legitimate descendant might be found among all George III.'s numerous family. The danger of a disputed succession was entirely avoided.

Death of the queen.

Lost in his solitary apartments at Windsor, George III. himself was utterly unconscious either of the marriages of his sons or of the births of his grandchildren. Wholly blind, wholly deaf, he moved through his stately chambers a living monument to his former greatness. Soon after the marriage of his sons Queen Charlotte, his

[1] He accepted it shortly afterwards, with the arrears.

[2] *Ann. Reg.*, vol. lx. pp. 84–93. *Hansard*, vol. xxxix. pp. 114, 118, 151.

CHAP. VI. 1819.

constant companion and guardian, died. Queen Charlotte had been naturally entrusted with the care of the king's person. The trust, after her death, was transferred to the king's second and favourite son, the Duke of York.

Arrangements on her death.

Financial arrangements of some importance became in consequence necessary. In 1812 Parliament had appropriated 100,000*l.* a year to the king's household; 58,000*l.* a year to the queen's establishment; and had granted Her Majesty an additional 10,000*l.* a year as the king's custos. So long as it had been possible to entertain hopes of the king's recovery it was obviously necessary to maintain the splendour of his establishment. But these hopes had long since ceased; 100,000*l.* was clearly too large a sum for the maintenance of the infirm old king. It transpired, indeed, that the Queen's house, in St. James's Park, had been completed and furnished out of the surpluses of the grant;[1] and it was accordingly decided to reduce the vote in future from 100,000*l.* to 50,000*l.* a year. The allowance of 58,000*l.* to the queen lapsed, of course, with her death; though it was necessary to pay certain pensions to old servants on her household; and these pensions were ultimately fixed at 25,000*l.* a year. So far the proposals of the Ministry were adopted without much dissension. They were, indeed, compelled to withdraw some of the pensions which they had proposed to allow to certain members of the late queen's household, but the principle of their measures was, up to this point, unanimously approved.[2]

The late queen had, however, enjoyed a grant of 10,000*l.* a year as the king's custos: the ministry proposed to assign this sum to the Duke of York as her successor. The proposal was exactly calculated to stir up a storm in Parliament. The Ministry were notoriously feeble; they were regarded with almost undisguised contempt in the House of Commons;[3] and, whatever view

[1] *Regency*, vol. ii. p. 302. [2] Ibid., p. 302. [3] Ibid., pp. 301, 325.

Parliament might take, a motion which contemplated economy was certain to be popular out of doors. It was possible, moreover, to raise a very strong argument against the propriety of the grant. The Duke of York could hardly desire to derive any pecuniary advantage from his father's lunacy; the utmost that he could require was that his expenses should be fully repaid to him. But it was impossible to suppose that these expenses could amount to 100,000*l.* a year. The duke could hardly spend 10,000 shillings in posting from Oatlands to Windsor and from Windsor to Oatlands. Nor was it at all clear that the duke's expenses, whatever might be their amount, should be defrayed out of the public purse. The charge of every lunatic was a cost on his estate; and the principle, which was universally adopted in the Court of Chancery, ought, it was contended, to be followed in the case of the king. His Majesty had 50,000*l.* a year for the expenses of the Windsor establishment; his privy purse amounted to 60,000*l.*; and the Duchy of Lancaster yielded another 10,000*l.* The bill for the Duke of York's post-horses might surely be paid out of this 120,000*l.* The Duke of York was himself so dismayed at these arguments that it was announced that he wished to withdraw any claim for salary. But the Regent would not hear of his brother's moderation. He was not, perhaps, altogether displeased that the public odium should for the moment be transferred from himself to his presumptive heir. 'So, sir, you want to be popular at our expense,'[1] was the answer which, it was rumoured, he gave to the Duke of York's appeal; and after this answer it became almost impossible for the duke to withdraw his application. Weak as the Ministry were, however, they were able to carry the vote by large majorities. Their usual supporters voted with them compactly; many of

[1] *Regency*, vol. ii. p. 321.

CHAP. VI. 1819.

the more moderate members of the Opposition joined them on the occasion; and the 10,000*l.* was accordingly voted. But, though the vote was granted by a large majority,[1] it was doubtful whether the additional income which the duke thus succeeded in obtaining repaid the keen attack which the proposal of it excited. While Parliament was discussing grants of thousands to royal dukes the questions out of doors were, 'How many more paupers must be consigned to our workhouses?' 'How much more of misery and crime must exist?' Prudent men thought that it was hardly worth while, for the sake of an annuity of 10,000*l.* dependent on the life of an old king tottering to his grave, to have such things said in the House of Commons.[2]

Death of the Duke of Kent.

The death of the queen was followed, on the 23rd of January, 1820, by the death of the Duke of Kent. The duke was perhaps the least unpopular of the sons of George III. Born on the 2nd of November, 1767, educated partly abroad, and engaged, during the earlier years of his life, in active military service at Gibraltar and in Canada, he was fortunately spared from many of the temptations which ruined the characters of his other brothers. During his professional career he showed no great military talent, but he displayed in a remarkable degree the gallantry for which all his family were conspicuous. A stern disciplinarian, he was unpopular among his troops; and the storm which was created by his well-intentioned effort at Gibraltar to check the licentiousness and drunkenness of the garrison compelled him finally to retire from the governorship of this colony. From 1803 to 1816 he lived in this country; but, embarrassed in his circumstances, and anxious to escape from his embarrassments, in the course of 1816 he decided on

[1] By 281 votes to 186; and later on by 247 votes to 137. *Hansard*, vol. xxxix. pp. 296–322, 552–606, 664–708.

[2] *Ann. Reg.*, 1819, Hist., pp. 9–26.

residing abroad; and, with the exception of a short interval, he remained on the Continent till within a few months of his death. He returned to England in 1819, and, in the course of that year, his daughter, our present Queen, was born. The duke, soon after her birth, took a small cottage in the neighbourhood of Sidmouth. A long walk on a wet day, and a neglect to change his boots, brought on a severe cold; the cold settled on the lungs; inflammation ensued; and, though his royal highness was, after the fashion of the period, freely bled, the relief did not save his life. CHAP. VI. 1820.

The public heard with general regret of the duke's death. Those who had known him best were ready to speak favourably of his dignified bearing and his engaging manners. Those who did not enjoy any acquaintance with him had heard that, notwithstanding the embarrassment of his circumstances, he had always been ready to assist every charitable object. The country forgave his extravagances because they were associated with his charities. The birth of his infant daughter, too, had given the nation a new interest in his royal highness. It was already evident that the little orphan at Sidmouth might possibly, or even probably, be Queen of England; and the Duke of Kent was therefore regarded not merely as the son of an afflicted king, but as the father of a future queen.

Death of George III.

But the death of the Duke of Kent was soon forgotten in the occurrence of a still more engrossing event. Six days after the death of the Duke of Kent, George III. himself died suddenly at Windsor. For nearly ten years he had lived in complete obscurity, bereft of his reason, bereft of his sight, bereft of his hearing. He had been ignorant of the great victory which had been won by his people; he had been ignorant of the changes which had occurred in his own family. Those among his subjects who as children had remembered him as king, had grown

CHAP. VI. 1820.

up to man's estate in the interval of his retirement. Those who, as men and women, had known him as their monarch had passed from the prime of life into old age. Yet they had none of them forgotten their venerable sovereign. The whole nation was unaffectedly moved by the news of his death. His long public life had had much to attract their attention. The numerous vicissitudes of his reign, the splendid triumphs with which it had been concluded, were subjects on which everyone could dwell. But the nation generally dwelt more on the private virtues of their old sovereign than on all the great achievements which had been accomplished in his lifetime. They saw in him a model of an English gentleman—pure in his domestic life, frugal in his expenses, friendly to his neighbours, kindly to his dependents, charitable to the poor, faithful to his creed; and, though for ten years he had been isolated from all his friends, his simple virtues, and his dignified manners, were still the common story among them all.

The death of George III. did not create a single void in the machinery of the State. He had been politically dead so long that his actual death necessitated only a change of names, and hardly caused the alteration of a single arrangement. The Regent became king; the Duke of York became heir-presumptive; the little child, whose father had just died suddenly at Sidmouth, was brought one step nearer to the throne. But the new king had for all intents and purposes been king for the last ten years. Everyone was acquainted with his character. Everyone knew the little that could be said for his external qualifications. Everyone had heard the much that could be said against his extravagance, his intemperance, and immorality. There was no speculation on the character of the new monarch, because his most unfortunate character was already sufficiently plain. But, if there were no speculation about the character of the new

monarch, there was considerable doubt whether he would be spared to enjoy his new dignity. The morning after George III. died, George IV. held a council, at which the ministers were formally reappointed, and the councillors were formally sworn. His Majesty addressed a few silvered words of promise to his councillors, and took the usual oaths required by the law. But the ceremony was hardly over before it was known that the new king was himself seriously ill. He had for some days had a severe cold; and the excitement of the week had increased his disorder, and brought on the very disease of which the Duke of Kent had just died, inflammation of the lungs. The drastic treatment of his physicians ultimately subdued the more serious symptoms, and the king, as the chroniclers of the time phrased it, 'fortunately' recovered.[1] It is doubtful whether any modern historian would repeat the adverb. In every respect but one it was a matter of little moment whether George, or Frederick, or William filled the throne of their father. But in one respect any of the other princes would have been preferable to their elder brother. The accession of George IV. to the throne unhappily brought to an issue the numerous questions involved in his separation from his wife. His death would have saved the people of England the most distressing chapter in their recent history.

Illness of George IV.

It will be remembered that the Princess of Wales left England in the course of 1814. She was accompanied by two English ladies, Lady Charlotte Lindsay, a daughter of the Earl of Guilford, and Lady Elizabeth Forbes; by Mr. St. Leger, Sir William Gell and the Hon. Keppel Craven, her chamberlains; and by Doctor Holland, her physician. She proceeded in the first instance to Brunswick, and from Brunswick she went to Milan. At Milan it became necessary to engage a courier; and her chamber-

The Princess of Wales.

[1] *Ann. Reg.*, 1820, Hist., p. 17.

CHAP. VI. 1820.

lain applied to the Marquis Ghisiliari, the grand chamberlain of the Emperor of Austria, who had been appointed to attend on the princess, for a suitable person. The marquis recommended one Bartolomeo Bergami. Bergami had been in the service of General Pino, an Italian officer, and seems to have been on unusually intimate terms with the marquis himself.[1] With this addition to her establishment the princess proceeded from Milan to Florence, from Florence to Rome, and from Rome to Naples. She arrived at Naples on the 8th of November, 1814, and she left it in March 1815. The princess proceeded in March from Naples to Rome, from Rome to Civita Vecchia; and at Civita Vecchia she embarked on board the 'Clorinde,' an English man-of-war, for Genoa. She stayed at Genoa till the 15th of May, when she went to Milan, and resided for some months at the Casa Borromeo, in the immediate vicinity of that town. After a short excursion to Venice she returned to Milan, where she stayed at the Villa Villani; and in August of the same year she visited the Mont St. Gothard, Bellinzona, Lugano, and finally established herself on the margin of the Lake of Como, in the well-known Villa d'Este. On the 15th of November, 1815, the princess again returned to Genoa, embarked on the 'Leviathan,' an English man-of-war, and, after a short visit to Elba, proceeded to Palermo. She stayed at Palermo for ten days, from the 26th of November to the 6th of December, when she removed to Messina. She resided at Messina till the 6th of January, 1816, when she embarked on board her old friend, the 'Clorinde,' for Syracuse. From Syracuse she moved in February to Catania, and in March to Augusta. At Augusta she hired a polacre, a vessel of 260 tons' burden, and proceeded in it to Tunis. From Tunis she went to Utica, Savona, and Athens, which she reached on the 22nd

[1] See Sir W. Gell's evidence that the marquis kissed Bergami on parting from him. *Ann. Reg.*, 1820, Hist., p. 1063.

of April. She subsequently visited Constantinople, Ephesus, Troy, and Jerusalem; and, re-embarking on board the polacre in August, after touching at Syracuse, landed in September at Terracina. From Terracina she returned to the Villa d'Este. 1820.

After a short residence in the Villa d'Este and at a place in the neighbourhood, the Barona, which she had bought for Bergami, the princess, in February 1817, commenced another tour. She visited on this occasion Scharnitz, Innspruck, Munich, Carlsruhe, Vienna, Trieste, and Venice, and returned to the Barona in April 1817. In July she journeyed to Rome, where she took the Villa Brande; and in August she proceeded to Pesaro. The Counsel for the king did not accurately trace her movements after this point; and, as the charges, which were subsequently preferred against her, all related to her life anterior to 1817, it is not necessary to do so here. It is sufficient to remark—for her apology must mainly depend on the fact—that from her departure in England she had led a nomad life, visiting strange places, necessarily introduced to strange society, and compelled, whatever were her inclinations, to put up with strange quarters.

Her suite.

Her English suite left her at a very early period of her travels. Lady Charlotte Lindsay[1] joined the queen at Naples, in March 1815, travelled with her from Naples to Rome, from Rome to Civita Vecchia, and from Civita Vecchia, on board the 'Clorinde,' as far as Leghorn. Lady Elizabeth Forbes had previously left her Royal

[1] Lady Charlotte Lindsay was the daughter of Frederick, second Earl of Guilford, better known as Lord North. She married the Honourable James Lindsay. Lady Charlotte Campbell was the daughter of the fifth Duke of Argyll. She married first Colonel L. Campbell, and second the Rev. E. Bury. The princess offered to make one of her daughters a bedchamber woman, with 200*l.* a year. (See *Diary of the Life and Times of George IV.*, vol. ii. p. 165.) Lady Charlotte Bury was supposed to be the author of a good deal of the *Diary*. There is strong internal evidence, however, to prove that she was not the author of the greater portion of that most scandalous book, though she was on intimate terms with the writer.

CHAP. VI. 1820.

Highness at Naples.[1] Lady Charlotte Campbell, who joined the princess on her arrival at Genoa, left her two months afterwards at Milan. Mr. St. Leger was not with the princess in Italy. Sir William Gell and the Honourable Keppel Craven left the princess at Naples, and Dr. Holland left her on her first visit to Venice. The whole of her original suite, therefore, left her before she had been a year in Italy. The only English gentlemen who were regularly attached to her service afterwards were two officers of the navy, Lieutenant Flinn and Lieutenant Hownam. Lieutenant Flinn was settled at Messina when the princess visited it at the close of 1815; and, at her Royal Highness's desire, arranged for the hire of the polacre, which carried her to Tunis and the East, and commanded it during the voyage. Lieutenant Hownam, also a lieutenant in the navy, was the son of one of her pages, and had passed his life in her service and in that of the Princess Charlotte. He joined the princess in April 1815, and remained with her throughout her subsequent adventures from 1815 to 1818.

The retirement of the majority of her English suite compelled the princess to turn elsewhere for attendants; and she was, perhaps unavoidably, driven to take her new servants from the country in which she was mainly residing. Bartolomeo Bergami had been engaged, almost on her very entrance into Italy, as a courier and valet; but, though he continued for some months to discharge the menial duties of a courier, he was soon treated with a marked consideration by his mistress.[2] He assisted her

Bergami.

[1] 'Je serai absolument sans dame,' was the princess's own phrase at Rome. (*Diary*, vol. ii. p. 165.) 'Lady Charlotte Lindsay and Monsieur F. North sont les seules personnes qui m'accompagne (*sic*), mais ils sont obligée (*sic*) de me quitter alors pour se rendre en Angleterre. . . . Lady E. Forbes se rende en Angleterre. Monsieur Craven chez sa mère à Paris. Monsieur Hesse pour l'Angleterre, et je crois que Sir William Gell reste encore quelque temps à Naple (*sic*).' —*Diary*, vol. ii. p. 176.

[2] The author (or one of the authors) of the *Diary of the Life and Times of George IV.* says of Bergami, in 1815: 'The first person who opened

to change a fancy dress which she wore at a masked ball in Naples; he breakfasted with her at Genoa; he was regularly admitted to her dinner-table after the princess's visit to Lugano; he was promoted to the dignity of chamberlain almost immediately afterwards; he was advanced, either at the princess's instigation or, at any rate, with the view of affording her pleasure, to the dignity of a Knight of Malta at Catania; he was made Baron della Francina at Augusta; and he was presented with a considerable estate, near Milan, which the princess purchased for him, and to which she gave the name of the Villa Bergami. More intimate familiarities had, moreover, certainly taken place. During the princess's voyage from Augusta to Tunis, and from Tunis to the East, during her stay in the Holy Land, and during her return to Italy, she had usually slept under a tent, erected on board the polacre, when she was at sea, or at any convenient spot when she was on land. There is no doubt whatever that Bergami frequently, if not always, slept under the same tent. The princess required the protection of a male attendant, and she selected Bergami for the purpose. It is not surprising that a servant, promoted with so much rapidity and honoured with so much familiarity, should have received more open marks of favour. At Jerusalem the princess instituted an order of 'St. Caroline of Jerusalem,' and she made Bergami, the Baron della Francina, Grand Master. Bartolomeo Bergami, through the favour of his mistress, had become in a few months a Knight of Malta, a baron, a Grand Master of the Order of St. Caroline, and the owner of a considerable estate. The sailors on board the polacre coupled his name with the princess, and drank to them together.

During the same period other members of Bergami's

the door to me (at Genoa) was the one whom it was impossible to mistake, hearing what is reported: six feet high, a magnificent head of black hair, pale complexion, mustachios which reach from here to London. Such is the Stork.'—*Diary*, vol. ii. p. 195.

CHAP. VI.

1820.

family were advanced to situations in the princess's service. The Countess Oldi, his sister, became her lady in waiting; Faustina, another sister, superintended the linen; his little child, Victorine, slept in the princess's bedroom; his brother, Louis, was made her equerry. His cousin, Bernardo, was made prefect of the palace; his cousin, Francisco, accountant. Faustina's husband, Martini, was also in the princess's service; and Bergami's mother paid the princess a two months' visit.[1] His wife, alone among his nearest relations, does not seem to have been admitted into the princess's company. She lived quietly and respectably at Milan; she refrained from assuming the titles which had been bestowed on her husband, and shared neither the rank which he had gained nor the society into which he had been admitted. The exclusion of Bergami's wife from the honours which all his other relations enjoyed was regarded by the princess's enemies as a circumstance nearly as suspicious as the advancement of Bergami.

The princess's conduct.

The few facts which have thus been mentioned are the most important of those which were ultimately proved against the princess. It is not necessary to sully a work, which is intended for general reading, with a detail of the lighter rumours which were whispered on all sides, or with a recital of the more indelicate charges which were not decisively established. But it is only fair to the princess's memory to add that it is possible to advance excuses for her most indiscreet behaviour which would not be available in the case of an ordinary lady. Any lady, indeed, who chose to travel to Jerusalem in the earlier years of the present century was necessarily compelled to submit to hardships which would have been peculiarly distressing to a woman of a refined nature. On one occasion in the East, for instance, she had to lay down in a cattle-shed with the rest of her suite. A lady

[1] See Carlo Forti's evidence, *Ann. Reg.*, 1820, Chron., p. 1076.

prepared to herd with her attendants in this way might have seen less harm than a more sensitive person in sleeping under the same tent with a male attendant. The apology should be stated, because it is the only excuse which it is possible to offer for the indiscretions which, if the princess were innocent, she undoubtedly committed. The nature of the princess was, indeed, anything but sensitive. Her personal habits were extraordinary. Everyone in her household had a nickname. She herself was 'Mrs. Thompson,' William Austin was 'Willikin,' Sir William Gell, 'Bluebeard;' Lady Anne Hamilton, 'Joan of Arc.' Those who liked the princess best had little opinion of her discretion. The improprieties of which she was guilty may, perhaps, be inferred from the gratification which her suite expressed when their mistress happened to be discreet either in her dress or in her behaviour. One of the authors of the 'Diary,' for instance, remarks, in 1815: 'She had no rouge on, wore tidy shoes, and looked altogether uncommonly well.' Soon afterwards, on another occasion, he observes: 'Her dress, conversation, and manners happened by some lucky chance to be all perfectly proper.'[1] 'Perfectly proper' was not, unfortunately, the description which could ordinarily be applied to the princess. She adopted in 1802 the son of Sophia Austin; and, though she had in consequence brought upon herself the charges which led, in 1806, to the 'Delicate Investigation,' the boy whom she had thus adopted regularly occupied her bedchamber till after her entrance into Italy in 1814. She only removed him then on the remonstrance of her chamberlains that he was too old to sleep in the same room as herself. It is difficult to do justice to a person who could uniformly act in so unguarded a manner. No lady would consent to sleep under the same tent with a man who was not her husband; but no lady would consent to sleep in the same

[1] *Diary*, vol. ii. pp. 195, 238.

CHAP. VI. 1820.

room with a big boy of thirteen who was not her own child. Yet the princess did the latter without apparently perceiving the indelicacy of her act. Is it possible that she may have failed to see the impropriety of sleeping in the same tent with Bergami?

The Prince.

Rumours of the strange life which the princess was leading were continually brought to this country. They necessarily attracted the attention of the Regent, and were the subject of the anxious consideration of the Ministry. The Regent had probably always desired to get rid of his wife; but his anxiety to do so was immensely increased after the death of his only daughter in the autumn of 1817. His ministers foresaw the difficulty of gratifying their master. Every argument which could be employed against the princess could be turned with crushing effect against her husband. The prince had commenced the quarrel by withdrawing himself from his wife's society, and had notified his intention to do so in a brutal letter.[1] Ever since the date of that letter he had been notoriously living a life of the most immoral character. No private gentleman could have ventured under such circumstances to apply for a divorce. His application would have been rejected by the Legislature without a moment's hesitation. The Ministry might fairly say that the prince should hesitate to prefer an application which none other of his father's subjects would venture to bring. Experience, too, had made them cautious. On every previous occasion on which the prince had attacked his wife the princess had achieved a quasi-victory over her husband. The four lords who had conducted the 'Delicate Investigation' in 1806 had acquitted her of the main charge brought against her. An informal inquiry, instituted by the prince in 1813 before a select committee of Privy Councillors, had led to a popular demonstration in her

[1] This letter, properly called a 'Letter of License,' will be found in *The Book*, and in *Ann. Reg.*, 1820, Chron., p. 1053.

favour. The princess, moreover, was abroad. It was both prudent and politic to induce her to stay abroad. The puddle might pass for clean water till it was stirred. It was sheer folly to stir it, and prove to everyone that it was only mud. CHAP. VI. 1820.

There was, however, among the prince's advisers a very able and very ambitious lawyer. Endowed with unusual talents, but free from the responsibilities attaching to office, Sir John Leach, a member of the Whig party, had, for years, been on intimate terms with the Regent. He had been presented by the Regent in 1816 with the Chancellorship of the Duchy of Cornwall, and had retired from Parliament on accepting the office. His Parliamentary career had not been very distinguished; and his friends, though they were annoyed at his desertion, did not suffer from his loss. Yet his talents were very considerable. 'He has,' wrote Romilly, 'great facility of apprehension, considerable powers of argumentation, and remarkably clear and perspicuous elocution. . . . He is extremely deficient in knowledge as a lawyer. All that he knows he has acquired, not by any previous study . . . but by his daily practice. This has thrown in his way a great deal of desultory information, which a good memory has enabled him to retain. In judgment he is more deficient than any man possessed of so clear an understanding that I ever met with. . . . Constant attendance at the Opera and at the gayest assemblies appears, in his opinion, to be as necessary to the support of his reputation as his presence in Westminster Hall; and he prides himself upon hastening every night from the dull atmosphere of the Rolls and Lincoln's Inn to the brilliant circles of high birth and fashion.' 'He aspires undoubtedly to the highest offices, and is flattered with the expectation of succeeding Lord Eldon as Chancellor.'[1] Vice-Chancellor Leach.

Leach did not long retain his comfortable but subor-

[1] Romilly, vol. iii. pp. 215, 216.

CHAP. VI. 1820.

dinate office in the Duchy of Cornwall. In the beginning of 1818 Sir William Grant, who had occupied with distinction the post of Master of the Rolls, resigned; Sir Thomas Plumer, the Vice-Chancellor, was selected to succeed him; and Leach was promoted to succeed Plumer. Before this change, however, Leach had acted, in virtue of his office, as the prince's principal legal adviser; and, in that capacity, had been consulted upon the princess's conduct. Several reports, unfavourable to her Royal Highness's character, had already reached this country. Captain Pechell, who commanded the 'Clorinde,' and who had twice conveyed her Royal Highness and suite in that vessel, formally reported to the Admiralty the honours to which Bergami had been promoted. In 1817 the chambermaid of the inn at Carlsruhe had formally deposed to some improprieties between the princess and Bergami, during their stay at that town, and her depositions had been forwarded to this country. In the autumn of the same year the Regent laid before Leach 'a large mass of papers, containing information from private and public sources with respect to the princess,' and desired a report upon them. Leach reported that the 'papers contained matter of grave and serious charge, and recommended that proper researches should be made in the countries where the princess had resided, and through which she had travelled, for such further information as might exclude all doubt with respect to the character of her conduct.' Leach's report was, of course, submitted to the Cabinet; and the Cabinet, though they declined to institute the inquiry themselves, undertook to bear the cost of it. Two gentlemen, Mr. Cooke, a member of the Chancery Bar, and Mr. Powell, a solicitor, were, on Leach's nomination, and with the concurrence of the Prime Minister and the Lord Chancellor, sent out to Italy, and 'placed in communication with the public authorities in the countries which they had occasion to

visit.' The Commission assembled at Milan in September 1818; it reported on the 10th of July, 1819; and its report was immediately submitted to the Cabinet.[1] But the Cabinet had already been attentively considering the matter. The princess's case had, in the previous month, been formally submitted to them by her Royal Highness's principal adviser; and a formal proposal for an arrangement was actually under their consideration.

The Milan Commission.

The princess in her past life had had many advisers; but one by one they had abruptly been taken from her. When the Delicate Investigation was instituted into her conduct she had found in Perceval an untiring defender. Perceval was prematurely killed; and the news of his death affected the princess as nothing had ever affected her before. 'I never saw her so deeply affected before or since,' said one who was with her at the time. 'I have lost my best friend,' she said the next day; 'I know not where to look for another.'[2] Her choice was, in fact, restricted. Friendship with the princess involved enmity with the prince; and every public man, who desired office or any favour from the Court, studiously avoided frequenting the princess's establishment at Kensington. Whitbread had little expectation of office, and he was too independent to adapt his conduct to the wishes of the prince. He became the princess's adviser. But the princess and her suite never felt towards Whitbread as they had towards Perceval. They suspected him, probably unjustly, of party motives; and they consequently regarded his advice with suspicion. Whitbread's friendship was, however, of no slight advantage to the unhappy lady; and his violent death again deprived her of her most experienced adviser. After Whitbread's death her cause was almost wholly sustained by the vigour and ability of Brougham Brougham's character has already been

Brougham.

[1] Yonge's *Lord Liverpool*, vol. iii. pp. 12, 13.
[2] *Diary*, vol. i. pp. 157–163.

CHAP. VI. 1820.

sketched in these pages. His was the most prominent figure on the Opposition benches of the House of Commons. His was the most prominent figure throughout the stirring events which followed the princess's return to this country in 1820. His name will for ever be associated with the efforts which he made for his royal mistress. The princess could not have found an abler advocate than Brougham; it is possible that she might have found a more judicious counsellor. Brougham's advice was, indeed, usually sound, but it was sometimes tendered at an unhappy moment. Intimately as he knew her Majesty, he hardly understood all the eccentricities of her character. Great as were his services towards her, he never succeeded in obtaining her entire confidence.

Brougham seems to have formed a slight acquaintance with the Princess of Wales in the course of 1809; and to have been formally consulted by her for the first time on the position of the Princess Charlotte towards the latter end of 1810. In 1812 and in 1813 he was her habitual adviser on the communications which she addressed, both to the queen and the prince, on the subject of her daughter's education. In 1813 he drew up the letter to the prince which instigated the inquiry instituted during that year into her conduct. In 1814 he was again called upon to advise her under very difficult circumstances. During the short interval of peace in 1814–15 the Emperor of Russia and other foreign potentates visited England. The queen held a drawing-room for their reception; and, as the prince positively declined to meet his wife in public, her Majesty was compelled to intimate to the princess the necessity for her absence. The princess, without consulting Brougham, wrote what her adviser subsequently called 'a mealy-mouthed' letter, and agreed not to go to Court. Brougham saw her error, and had the adroitness to turn it to excellent account. He prepared for the princess's signature a formal remon-

strance, to be addressed by her to the prince, stating that 'motives of personal consideration' towards the queen had induced her to refrain from exercising her 'right of appearing before her Majesty' at the public drawing-rooms, but intimating distinctly that she would not submit to be treated as guilty. 'Occasions may arise (one, I trust, is far distant) when I must appear in public, and your Royal Highness must be present also. Can your Royal Highness have contemplated the full extent of your declaration? Has your Royal Highness forgotten the approaching marriage of our daughter, and the possibility of our coronation?'[1]

His doubts and his advice.

Brougham, then, had been the constant adviser of the Princess of Wales from the close of 1810 to the period at which she had left England. But Brougham, though her constant adviser, does not seem at this period to have had much faith in her innocence. Before he allowed her to write to the prince in 1813 he had the courage and prudence to tell her that 'she must review her whole past life, and if there was anything in it which would not bear the light, . . . then the letter must not be sent to the prince.'[2] The way in which she received his warning gave him some uneasiness; and it seems fair to infer that this uneasiness was not wholly dispelled by the message which he subsequently received from her that 'the letter must go.' In 1819, again, when the Milan Commission were reporting, Brougham was clearly of opinion that it was best for all parties to patch up the quarrel. He was prepared to advise the princess to agree to a formal separation; to waive the right of coronation; and to adopt, after her husband's accession to the throne, some subsidiary title, such as Duchess of Cornwall, on condition that her annuity should be assured to her after the demise of the crown. This proposal Brougham put in writing and communicated to Lord Hutchinson,

[1] *Life of Lord Brougham*, vol. ii. pp. 215, 225. [2] Ibid., p. 166.

CHAP. VI.

1820.

who, as a friend of both parties, seemed admirably adapted for the office of mediator.[1]

Lord Hutchinson seems to have communicated this letter to the Regent; but the Regent was indisposed to acquiesce in the arrangements suggested in it. Ever since his daughter's death he had desired to marry again; and a mere separation from his wife, without a formal divorce, was obviously, therefore, insufficient for him. Two days after the date of Brougham's letter to Lord Hutchinson, 'he again pressed on the ministers his desire for a divorce.' The ministers replied that a divorce 'never could be accomplished by arrangement, nor obtained' until the princess's guilt was 'substantiated by evidence before some tribunal in this country.' 'Such a proceeding,' they added, 'could not be instituted without serious hazard to the interests and peace of the kingdom. On the other hand, the separation, which already exists . . . might be rendered complete . . . by some arrangement upon the principles suggested' by Brougham. The arrangement, however, could not be entertained 'unless the proposition and the terms of it were distinctly stated to originate on the part of the Princess of Wales, and to be sanctioned by her authority.' The prince retorted that it seemed to him doubtful whether such an arrangement as Brougham contemplated could be effected without the proofs which would justify a divorce; but that the report of the Milan Commission would afford 'the clearest and most decisive proof of guilt.' The Ministry, in a very remarkable memorandum, replied that, 'considering the manner in which a great part of this testimony has unavoidably been obtained, and the circumstance that the persons who have afforded it are foreigners, many of whom appear to be in a low station in life, it would not be possible to advise

[1] Yonge's *Lord Liverpool*, vol. iii. p. 16, where the letter is given. It is referred to in *Ann. Reg.*, 1820, Hist., p. 123.

your Royal Highness to institute any legal proceeding upon such evidence without further inquiry as to the character and circumstances of the witnesses by whom it is to be supported;' and that 'it appears to be more prudent to abstain from taking any further step in the matter under all the present circumstances.'[1]

The princess threatens to return to England.

So ended the first scene in the last act of this strange drama. Brougham's proposal was left in abeyance, first, because it failed to satisfy the prince, and, second, because it had not been distinctly authorised by the princess. The Regent's counter-proposition was vetoed, from the reluctance of the Ministry to commit themselves to it. The first scene had, however, been hardly concluded before the second scene unexpectedly commenced. The princess wrote an angry letter to Lord Liverpool, announcing her intention of returning to England. In the previous year she had filed a bill in Chancery upon the subject of an alleged debt due to her from the executors of her brother, the Duke of Brunswick. Count Munster, one of the duke's executors, thereupon filed an affidavit alleging doubts as to the genuineness of the documents on which the princess was relying to support her claim. The interminable delay of a Chancery suit irritated her Royal Highness. She decided that her own presence would expedite matters, and announced both to Lord Liverpool and Brougham her intention to return to England. The news hardly created less consternation in her principal adviser than in the Ministry itself. Brougham and the Ministry both saw the inconvenience of her proposed visit. The princess came as far as Lyons to meet Brougham; but Brougham, instead of meeting her, remonstrated with her for coming. His remonstrance for the time prevailed: the princess slowly retraced her steps. On the 8th of January, 1820, she changed horses at Genoa,[2] on her way

[1] Liverpool, vol. iii. p. 21. Lord Liverpool, vol. iii. p. 22. *Ann. Reg.*, 1820, Hist., p. 123.

[2] Colchester, vol. iii. p. 111.

CHAP. VI. 1820.

from Marseilles to Rome. Lord Colchester, who was staying at Genoa at the time, happened to see the two 'battered old German calèches' which conveyed her and her suite. The princess, Bergami, and a Frenchwoman occupied the first carriage; Bergami's brother and sister, William Austin, and 'another female' the second. The cloud which had loomed on the horizon rolled away with the princess's retreat, and no symptoms of the approaching storm remained.

Death of George III.

While, however, the princess was leisurely retreating to Italy the king's physicians were preparing the public for the possibility of his death. It was evident in January 1820 that the life of the infirm old man could not be prolonged for many weeks; and the death of the king was obviously calculated to revive the delicate controversy which had been so frequently raised on the princess's position. The 'Sun' of the 14th of January mentioned a rumour that 'measures are in train to effect a divorce in (*sic*) persons of a very exalted rank.' The 'Sun' did little more than stereotype the remark which was in everyone's mouth.

On the 29th of January the king died: the Ministry were brought face to face with the whole question. It had been the immemorial practice of the Privy Council on the commencement of a new reign to order the necessary changes in the Liturgy of the Church. It had been almost the invariable practice of the Church to pray by name for the king's consort and the heir-apparent.[1] The old prayer in the Litany, for instance, before the death

[1] The curious about such matters will find the subject fully discussed in the *Debates* in 1821. All that could be said upon the matter was then urged by Wetherell and Mackintosh on one side, and the Attorney-General on the other. The precedent which was most relied on by the Government was that of the wife of George I. It was not disputed on either side that George I.'s wife was not prayed for as queen. The Opposition, however, replied that she was not prayed for because she was divorced from the king, and for eighteen years before his accession had been a prisoner. The Government, on the contrary, denied the divorce. (See *Hansard*, New Series, vol. iv. pp. 139–219.)

of Queen Charlotte, had run thus: 'That it may please Thee to bless and preserve our gracious Queen, Charlotte, their Royal Highnesses George Prince of Wales, the Princess of Wales, and all the Royal Family.' If precedent had been strictly followed the new clause would have run: 'That it may please Thee to bless and preserve our gracious Queen, Caroline, their Royal Highnesses the Duke and Duchess of York, and all the Royal Family.' The new king was, however, anxious for a divorce from his wife, and determined that she should not receive the title of Queen. The Ministry were ready to compromise the matter. They were willing to consent to the omission of her name from the Liturgy on condition that no penal proceedings of any kind whatever should be attempted against her; one of them, indeed (Canning), declared that he 'could not have agreed to the omission of her name if any penal process, of whatever kind, had been in contemplation.' The Cabinet at once gave the necessary order for the alteration of the Liturgy in accordance with this arrangement. Their minute was dated the 10th of February, and on the 12th of February the 'Gazette' contained the usual notice. The 12th of February was a Saturday. The 'Gazette' did not reach the country clergy before the Sunday's service, and the majority of them, left to their own devices, followed the ordinary and rational course. For one Sunday at least, in nearly every parish church in England, the people prayed Almighty God 'to bless and preserve our gracious Queen, Caroline, and all the Royal Family.' [1]

The Queen's name omitted from the Liturgy.

The middle course which the Ministry had adopted did not satisfy the king. His Majesty received the decision of the Cabinet with extreme indignation. He seems to have consulted Leach, and with Leach's assistance to have drawn up a reply to the minute of the Ministry. In his written reply, the king contented himself with

[1] Yonge's *Lord Liverpool*, vol. iii. p. 31. *Ann. Reg.*, 1820, Chron., p. 32.

CHAP. VI. 1820.

attempting to controvert the conclusions of his ministers; but he gave them privately to understand that if they were not prepared to recommend a divorce he was determined to change his Government, or even to retire to Hanover.[1] The Cabinet met again on the Sunday, and prolonged their sitting till two o'clock on the Monday morning. 'The Cabinet sat for thirteen hours' on Sunday, wrote Phillimore to Lord Buckingham; 'there was a general report that ministers had resigned.' 'I consider the Government as virtually dissolved,' wrote Lord Castlereagh, 'and that the existing ministers only hold their situations till their successors are named.'[2] The Cabinet, however, had the firmness to maintain their opinions; and the king, as was his invariable practice, retracted his threats and submitted to their advice. But the difficulties of the Ministry were not terminated by this victory over their sovereign. Parliament, which had met on the 2nd of February, had been formally adjourned to Thursday, the 17th. On the previous day, which happened to be Ash Wednesday, the remains of the late king had been interred at Windsor. During the previous week some wag, with as much dexterity as wit, had placarded the metropolis, particularly the neighbourhood of Carlton House and Whitehall, with the following proclamation:—

Long live the King,
His Majesty
George the Fourth,
And the Queen Consort,
Her Majesty
Caroline:
May they live and reign together
For ever and ever!
Huzza! Huzza![3]

On the 18th, the day after Parliament met, Hume,

[1] Cf. Alison's *Lives of Castlereagh and Stewart*, vol. iii. pp. 118, 119; Yonge's *Liverpool*, vol. iii. pp. 24, 34.

[2] Greville, *Memoirs* vol. i. p. 24; Alison's *Lives of Castlereagh and Stewart*, vol. iii. p. 119; Duke of Buckingham's *Memoirs of the Court of George IV.*, vol. i. p. 8.

[3] *Ann. Reg.*, 1820, Chron., p. 34.

the member for Aberdeen, inquired whether the annual income of 35,000*l.*, which had been settled on the princess, had ceased, and whether the same or any other provision would be made for her. Lord Castlereagh's reply was satisfactory; and the subject, for the moment, was allowed to drop. But on the following Monday it was again revived. Hume drew attention to the queen's position; and Tierney, in an elaborate but injudicious speech, insisted that the Ministry were bound either to treat her as innocent or to institute an inquiry into her conduct. He for one would not vote her one shilling of the public money unless she was recognised as Queen. Brougham, on the contrary, took a very different position. He affected to regard the omission of the queen's name from the Liturgy, and her subsequent treatment, as 'trifles, light as air.'[1] The grant of a definite income still seemed to him the best thing for the king, the queen, and the country.

Hume's motion had a very different effect to that which had been contemplated by its author. It proved that the Opposition were themselves divided on the subject; and it therefore weakened rather than strengthened the queen's cause. Before the question was again brought before the House of Commons its aspect was entirely changed. Almost at the very time when the House of Commons was considering her situation the queen was entering Rome. She had seen an announcement in the newspaper of the death of George III., and she demanded, as Queen of England, that a guard of honour should be stationed at the door of her palace. Cardinal Gonsalvi, who was Minister to the Pope, replied that the Papal Government had received no intelligence from the King of England or his ministers that the Queen

[1] It is singular that the quotation should not have taught him the importance of 'trifles.'

'Trifles, light as air,
Are, to the jealous, confirmations strong
As proofs of holy writ.'

CHAP. VI.

1820.

The Queen's annoyance.

of England was in Rome; and that the guard could not, therefore, be granted. The queen was seriously annoyed: her annoyance was probably increased by the news that her name had been omitted from the Liturgy. She, however, allowed a clear fortnight to elapse before taking any decisive step in the matter. On the 16th of March she wrote from Rome to Lord Liverpool a curious letter:—

'The Queen of this Relams wishes to be informed through the medium of Lord Liverpool, First Minister to the King of this Relams, for which reason or motife the Queen name has been left out of the general Prayer-books in England, and especially to prevent all her subjects to pay her such respect which is due to the Queen. It is equally a great omittance towards the King that his Consort Queen should be obliged to soummit to such great neglect, or rather araisin from a perfect ignorance of the Archbishops of the real existence of the Queen Caroline of England.

'The Queen is also very anxious that Lord Liverpool should communicate this letter to the Archbishop of Canterbury.

'Lord Liverpool will be not able to believe, I am sure of it, how much the Queen was surprised of this first act of cruel Tyranne towards her, as she had been informed through the newspapers of the 22nd of February, that in the course of the Debbet in the House of Common on that evening, Lord Castlereagh, one of the best friends of Lord Liverpool, assured the Attorney General to the Queen Caroline, Mr. Brougham, that the King's servants would not omitte any attentions or use any harrsness towards the Queen, and after that speech of Lord Castlereagh to find her name left out of the Common prayer book as if she was no longer for this world.'

'The Queen trusts that before she arrives in London to receive satisfactory answer from Lord Liverpool.

'CAROLINE QUEEN.'[1]

[1] Yonge's *Liverpool*, vol. iii. p. 46. The *Ann. Reg.*, 1820, Hist., p. 131, publishes the letter; but the editor has turned it into English!

By the same post by which this letter was forwarded to Lord Liverpool the queen sent a longer letter, explanatory of her motives, which appeared in all the London newspapers; and, at the same time, she sent warrants appointing Brougham and Denman her Attorney and Solicitor General. Thomas Denman, who thus became associated with Brougham as adviser to the queen, was admirably adapted for the position which he was called on to fill. Born in 1779, he was, at this period of his career, forty-one years of age. The son of a physician in respectable practice, he had received an excellent education at Eton and Cambridge. Adopting the law as his profession, he had gradually, though steadily, achieved considerable distinction at the Bar. His professional success had two years before led to his introduction into Parliament as member for Wareham; while his growing reputation had subsequently commended him to the electors of Nottingham, one of the largest and most Radical of English constituencies. Denman had been retained for the defence of Lord Cochrane in 1815; he had displayed conspicuous ability in the defence of the Luddite prisoners in 1817; he had spoken against the increased allowance to the Duke of York; he had resisted the Six Acts, and he had demanded an inquiry into the Peterloo Massacre. He had thus made his reputation by a succession of attacks on the Ministry and the Court. His opposition, both to the one and the other, qualified him to be the champion of the queen. A commanding presence and an admirable voice gave him dignity as a speaker. The purity of his life and the singularly excellent example which he afforded, as a son, a father, and a husband, assisted to promote the cause of the queen. Men who were satisfied of her guilt while Brougham was her only adviser hesitated to condemn her when they learned that Denman also was her advocate.

Denman.

Denman had formed a very strong opinion that it

CHAP. VI. 1820.

would be desirable that the queen should come to England. Brougham, who knew much more of her case than Denman, anticipated consequences from her coming 'injurious, nay, perhaps ruinous to her interests,' and was ready to do his best to stop her.[1] He had written to the queen in February with this object; he had frequent interviews with Lord Liverpool on the subject; he arranged with the Ministry that 50,000*l.* a year should be settled on her for life, on condition of her never coming into any part of the British dominions; of her taking some other name or title than that of Queen of England; and of abstaining from the exercise of any of the rights or privileges of queen, except such as related to the appointment of law officers;[2] and he offered to meet her at any convenient place (such as Brussels or Lille) and endeavour to arrange the matter. It is possible that, if Brougham had been the queen's sole adviser, his interference at the eleventh hour would have induced her to put off her journey. About this time, however, the queen began to lean on a very different counsellor. Matthew Wood, alderman and ex-Lord Mayor of London, was a very remarkable personage. 'That vain, foolish busybody, Mr. Alderman Wood, citizen and fishmonger:' so H. Legge described him to Lord Colchester. 'Wood, the ass and alderman, whom they called Thistle Wood,'[3] wrote Brougham to Lord Hutchinson. 'The queen had occasionally dealt with him as a linendraper,' sneered Lord Liverpool's biographer. 'That beast Wood' was George IV.'s description of him. Brougham made the House of Commons on one occasion laugh by suggest-

Alderman Wood.

[1] Arnould's *Life of Denman*, vol. i. p. 143. Lord Liverpool, vol. iii. p. 49.

[2] Liverpool, vol. iii. p. 53.

[3] Alderman Wood took the indecent and almost incredible course of seeking an interview with Thistlewood on his way to execution, and asking him the particulars of his connection with Edwards, the informer. On the day after Thistlewood's execution—viz., on the 2nd of May, and again in the following week—the alderman brought Edwards's conduct before the House of Commons.—*Ann. Reg.*, 1820, Hist., pp. 34, 36.

ing that the initials A. W. (Alderman Wood) might stand also for 'absolute wisdom.' 'Absolute Wisdom' became thenceforward a popular nickname of the alderman.[1] Few men, then, were ever more violently attacked than Alderman Wood. Yet, notwithstanding the abuse of his contemporaries, the alderman had very considerable capacity. Denman, who knew him well, and who was a much fairer judge than Brougham, declared that he possessed 'uncommon perseverance and activity, no small share of natural sagacity, and much acquaintance with the character of the English people.'[2] The history of England during 1820 sufficiently refutes Brougham's attacks on the alderman's sagacity. If Brougham understood much more clearly than the alderman the nature of the queen's case, the alderman realised much more fully than Brougham the measure of popular support which she was certain to receive. 1820.

The Queen sets out for England.

Wood seems to have placed himself in communication with the queen towards the end of March or the beginning of April. On the 15th of April, 1820, she wrote to him from her villa at Pesaro: 'I am in great heaste leving this place in an hour's time. . . . The 30th April I shall be at Calais for certain.' But her movements were less rapid than she had promised to make them. She lingered for some days at Milan, and only reached Geneva on the 9th of May, nine days after she should have been at Calais. From Geneva she journeyed to Dijon; from Dijon to Montbard, where she was joined by Alderman Wood and Lady Anne Hamilton, a sister to the Duke of Hamilton. From Montbard she immediately proceeded to Villeneuve le Roi, which she reached on the 29th of May. Thence she wrote to Lord Liverpool desiring that a royal yacht might be placed at her disposal for the

[1] Colchester, vol. iii. p. 121. Yonge's *Liverpool*, vol. iii. p. 51. Arnould's *Denman*, vol. i. p. 145. Ibid., p. 139.

[2] Arnould's *Denman*, vol. i. p. 139. Cf. Yonge's *Liverpool*, vol. iii. p. 51.

CHAP. VI. 1820.

passage of the Channel; and to Brougham begging him to meet her at St. Omer. She arrived at St. Omer on Tuesday, the 30th of May.

The crisis had arrived. The queen was within a few hours' sail of the coast of England. The temporising policy of the Government had brought it face to face with a catastrophe which a few wise concessions might in all probability have averted. Hardly a hope remained that the queen, having come so far, would not come further; yet the Cabinet clung like drowning men to the slender hope which still sustained them. Brougham was asked to go to St. Omer in the double capacity of adviser to the queen and of a semi-official representative of the Ministry. Lord Hutchinson was directed to accompany him. Brougham was instructed to lay before the queen the agreement which he had already made with Lord Liverpool, for the grant to her of an annuity of 50,000*l.*, on condition of her residing abroad, under some other title than that of Queen of England. Lord Hutchinson, singularly enough, was not provided with any formal instructions, though he was generally acquainted with the views of the Regent and of the Ministry. These terms, as Lord Hutchinson understood them, seem to have been even less liberal than those which had been agreed upon between Brougham and Lord Liverpool. The queen was not merely to be debarred from taking the title of Queen, she was to refrain from using any title attached to the royal family of England.

Brougham and Lord Hutchinson depart to meet her.

Brougham and Lord Hutchinson reached St. Omer on Saturday, the 3rd of June. They found the queen surrounded by her Italian attendants; they learned that passports had already been obtained for her suite, and that she had determined to start for England the very next day. She was with difficulty persuaded to delay her journey for a few hours. She complained bitterly to Brougham of the indignities which she had

received abroad. One minister had styled her Caroline of Brunswick, another Caroline of England; and her complaints on these heads were so long and so loud that Brougham did not venture to present to her the draft agreement which he had all the time in his pocket. On the Sunday, Brougham persuaded her to receive the proposition which it was understood that Lord Hutchinson was to make. Lord Hutchinson, not having it 'in any specific form of words,' begged for some little delay to enable him to look over his papers. The queen gave him three hours; read his proposal, and rejected his terms in five minutes. Brougham, by her command, retired to write to Lord Hutchinson. The queen withdrew, ordered her carriage, and, with Alderman Wood, Lady Anne Hamilton, and William Austin, drove off to Calais. 'Trifles, light as air,' for which it was not worth while contending, had terminated the negotiations and precipitated the crisis.[1]

The Queen arrives in England.

The queen reached Calais at half-past eleven on Sunday night. At Calais she received a strong remonstrance from Brougham, who was sincerely anxious to dissuade her from her journey. But she was already on board the packet; her mind was fully made up; and at six the following morning the packet worked its way out of Calais harbour. A few hours' passage brought the boat to Dover; and at one o'clock on Monday, the 5th of June, the queen landed in England. The Commandant, who had received no special instructions, followed the ordinary course and fired a royal salute. An immense multitude assembled and cheered her. The inhabitants presented her with an address, congratulating her on her accession to the throne; and she expressed, in a dexterous reply, 'her hope that she should be permitted to promote the happiness of her husband's subjects.' But the queen

[1] *Ann. Reg.*, 1820, Hist., pp. 133, 135. Yonge's *Liverpool*, vol. iii. pp. 63-69. Brougham's *Memoirs*, vol. ii. pp. 356-366.

CHAP. VI. 1820.

had come to act, not to bandy compliments. On the evening of the same day she left Dover and reached Canterbury. It was already dark when she arrived at the cathedral city. But a hundred flambeaux showed to her the immense crowd assembled to receive her. The horses were removed from her carriage, and the queen was drawn by the people to the door of her hotel. The Mayor and Corporation, in their robes of office, waited on her with an address; and the queen, still more confident than at Dover, promised in her reply to do 'anything to make *my* people happy.'

Her progress to London.

The queen rose at an early hour on the following morning. The weather was unpropitious; but the rain did not deter her Majesty from resuming her journey, or the crowds from thronging to welcome her. Her journey from Canterbury to London was one long triumphal procession. She left Canterbury at half-past ten in the morning, the people not allowing the horses to be put to the carriage, but drawing her out of the town. The officers of the cavalry regiment stationed at Canterbury escorted her as far as Sittingbourne. The clergy, in their gowns and bands, showed their indifference to the rumours of her Majesty's conduct by waiting on her at Sittingbourne. But the respect which was shown to her by the Army and the Church formed the least gratifying portion of the remarkable reception. At every village through which she passed all business was suspended, and the bells of every parish church rang out a merry peal of welcome. The entire nation seemed animated by one universal enthusiasm in her cause. Chatham, Rochester, and Strood poured forth their tens of thousands to do honour to their queen. At Gravesend she was again drawn by the people from one end of the town to the other. Hundreds of vehicles swelled the procession as it reached the metropolis. 'Deptford and Greenwich poured out in indiscriminate concourse

all ranks and conditions of their inhabitants; Blackheath resembled some great Continental fair. All classes of the people, men and women, old and young, grave and gay, shared in the universal enthusiasm.

The queen, overcome with the fatigue and excitement of her journey, rested for twenty minutes at this point before she resumed her approach to the capital. The weather improved as she reached the metropolis. Her carriage was thrown open; and, amidst the acclamations of a countless multitude, swelling into a louder and louder strain, the journey was resumed. The queen's equipage was mean and miserable. The carriage in which she sat was shabby. 'That beast Wood,' alderman and fishmonger, sat by her side. Lady Anne Hamilton, sister to the duke, occupied the opposite seat. Six or seven carriages, filled with the queen's suite, followed her own. The queen was in mourning for the late king, and bowed her acknowledgments to the multitude which was welcoming her. The vast throng, forming one compact mass, rolled over Westminster Bridge, through Parliament Street and Whitehall to Pall Mall. As the queen's carriage passed Carlton House, the king's residence, Alderman Wood stood up and gave three cheers. The sentries at the gates, following the example of the Commandant at Dover, presented arms. The cavalcade rolled on up St. James's Street till it reached the residence of Alderman Wood, in South Audley Street, where the queen alighted. The multitude did not disperse till her Majesty had bowed her acknowledgments from the balcony.

The immediate causes of her popularity.

The enthusiasm with which the queen was greeted has probably had no parallel in the history of England; yet it was due to very simple causes, and affords a striking testimony to Alderman Wood's sagacity. It was attributable to two motives which have a strong influence in the English character: an admiration of pluck and

CHAP. VI. 1820.

a hatred of oppression. Up to the date of her Majesty's landing at Dover one of these motives alone had influenced the people. They thought her oppressed, and they gave her their sympathy; but they were ignorant of her courage, and they withheld from her their admiration. She landed, and, in the words of a contemporary chronicler, 'the calm was changed into a storm.' 'Journals which, on the Monday, would only grant her a few lines, and those expressed with the utmost caution, now sounded the trumpet of alarm throughout the land, and called on the friends of innocence to avenge the past insults of their queen, and to protect her against them for time to come.' The calmest and gravest intellects caught the general infection. 'If her father had advanced to Paris,' wrote Ward, 'as fearlessly as she advanced to London, we might have been spared five-and-twenty years' war.' 'She approaches wisely, because boldly,' wrote Wilberforce, on the eve of her entry into the metropolis; how deeply interested all are—indeed, I feel it myself—about her! One can't help admiring her spirit, though I fear she has been very profligate.'

Yet, though everyone admired her courage and sympathised with her in her misfortunes, few, if any, believed in her innocence. Brougham, on the morning of her arrival, disclosed for the first time all his apprehensions to Denman, and finished a long series of awkward statements by saying, 'So now we are in for it, Mr. Denman!' The Whigs espoused the queen's cause; but the Whig ladies did not call upon her.[1] Mrs. Denman was extremely anxious to do so, but Denman begged her to wait till Mrs. Brougham had left her name, 'dreading that such scenes of vice and debauchery would be proved as would overwhelm with shame any woman who had formed any acquaintance with the criminal.' The mob

[1] So say Denman (vol. i. p. 149) and Bootle Wilbraham, in Colchester, vol. iii. p. 142. The latter, however, excepts Lady Tavistock. He might also have excepted the Dowager Lady Lansdowne, Lady Harrington, and Mrs. Damer.—*Ann. Reg.*, 1820, Chron., p. 219.

thoroughly shared this feeling. Brougham has recorded that they called for 'three cheers for Mr. Austin, the queen's son,' thereby assuming her to have been convicted of the high treason of which she had been acquitted in 1806. The strength of the queen's cause lay 'in the general demurrer which all men, in and out of Parliament, made—namely, that, admit everything true which is alleged against the queen, after the treatment she had received ever since she came to England, her husband had no right to the relief prayed by him, and the punishment he sought against her.'[1]

Action of the Ministry.

Lord Hutchinson and Brougham had been left by the queen at St. Omer; the one disappointed at the failure of his mission, the other vexed at the rejection of his advice. 'I suppose she will have Wood for her Attorney-General,' he wrote in the first flush of his annoyance to Denman. But his irritation induced him to quicken his movements. He lost no time in leaving St. Omer. He travelled with the utmost rapidity to London, and reached the metropolis before the queen. The moment was critical. The news of the queen's intentions had reached London on the evening of the day on which she had left St. Omer. A Cabinet council had been hastily summoned, and had sat late into the night. The ministers had reassembled at ten o'clock on the following morning, and had prolonged their sitting till half-past twelve. Parliament met at two. Immediately after the conclusion of some formal business Lord Liverpool brought down to the House of Lords certain papers, sealed up in a green bag, respecting the conduct of the queen since her departure from the kingdom, and gave notice that he would refer the papers to a secret committee on the morrow.

[1] Brougham, vol. ii. pp. 365, 366; *Ann. Reg.*, 1820, Hist., p. 140. Arnould's *Denman*, vol. i. p. 149; Wilberforce memoirs, vol. v. p. 55. Ward's correspondence with the Bishop of Llandaff, p. 255. The three cheers for 'Mr. Austin, the queen's son,' remind the modern reader of the illogical remark of one of the Tichborne mob: 'D' you think that I'll see *Arthur* deprived of his rights?' Sir John Karslake told the Author that this question was actually proposed to him by one of the Tichborne mob.

CHAP. VI.

1820.

A similar green bag, similarly sealed, and accompanied with a similar message, was carried to the House of Commons by Lord Castlereagh. On the following Sunday a clergyman of the Church of England, with more humour than reverence, took for his text the verse in Job: 'My transgression is sealed up in a bag.'[1] On the 6th of June, after a short discussion, the House of Lords referred the papers which Lord Liverpool had brought down to it to a secret committee. In the Commons, Brougham anticipated the motion which it was understood that Lord Castlereagh would propose, by presenting a message from the queen deprecating a private inquiry, and demanding an open investigation into her conduct. The communication was received with cheers, but it in no way altered the conduct of the Government. Lord Castlereagh immediately rose to move for the appointment of a secret committee. Brougham followed Castlereagh, and, in an incomparable speech, entered at great length into the whole of the queen's case, and concluded by deprecating the appointment of the committee. The speech was unexpected, and its effect was magical. Canning, who had been the intimate friend of the queen in previous years, and who still retained a lively remembrance of her fascinating manners, defended the Ministry for the steps which had already been taken, but solemnly announced his resolution never to place himself in the position of her accuser. Wilberforce, whose influence, whose character, and whose ability admirably adapted him for the office of mediator, proposed an adjournment of a few days, in order that some compromise might be arranged through the instrumentality of common friends. The country gentlemen, seriously alarmed by Brougham, rose one after another in support of Wilberforce's proposal, and an adjournment of three days was, in the language of one of them, 'carried almost by acclamation.'[2]

[1] *Ann. Reg.*, 1820, Chron., pp. 144, 217. *Hansard*, New Series, vol. i. pp. 870, 905–985. Job. xiv. 17.

[2] *Ann. Reg.*, 1820, Hist., pp. 146–153. Denman, vol. i. p. 148. Brougham, vol. ii. p. 367. Colchester, vol. iii. p. 142.

CHAP. VI.

1820

Attempts at compromise.

Wilberforce had gained the country three days of grace; but neither the king nor the queen seemed likely to make any use of them. The enthusiasm of the mob was daily increasing. Placards were posted throughout the town commanding a great illumination for three nights. The mob cheered those who complied with their demands; they broke the windows of those who disobeyed them. The excitement among the populace extended to the army. One of the battalions of Guards, displaying symptoms of disaffection, was marched out of the metropolis; and the whole kingdom seemed threatened with revolution and division. Wednesday passed by. The queen made no advance towards a compromise; the king was sullenly determined to make none. Thursday came; but neither side availed themselves of the opportunity which Wilberforce had obtained for them. Late on the Friday afternoon, on the eve of the meeting of the House, the queen's reluctance yielded to the importunity of her advisers, and she deigned to make an overture to Lord Liverpool. 'She had directed,' she commanded Brougham to say, 'her most serious attention to the declared sense of Parliament as to the propriety of some amicable adjustment of existing differences; and, submitting to that high authority with the gratitude due to the protection she has always received from it, her Majesty no longer waits for a communication from the Ministers of the Crown, but commands Mr. Brougham to announce her own readiness to consider any arrangement that can be suggested consistent with her dignity and honour.'

The Ministry, on the receipt of this letter, adjourned the House for a further period of three days, or till Monday, the 12th, to enable some arrangement to be made. Lord Liverpool, in the meanwhile, briefly referred the queen to the memorandum already delivered by him to Brougham; but offered to receive any suggestions which her Majesty or her advisers might have to offer on

CHAP. VI. 1820.

the proposition. The queen desired Brougham to reply that the memorandum appeared to have been superseded by Lord Hutchinson's later proposition; that she now saw it for the first time; that she did not 'consider it consistent with her dignity and honour;' and that 'the recognition of her rank and privileges as queen must be the basis of any arrangement which can be made.' Lord Liverpool thereupon declared that, though 'the memorandum proposed that her Majesty should abstain from the exercise of the rights and privileges of queen, with certain exceptions,' it 'did not call upon her to renounce any of them. Whatever appertains to her Majesty as queen must continue to appertain to her so long as it is not abrogated by law.' The Ministry were now willing to receive any proposition for an adjustment which her Majesty's advisers might make, provided that it had 'for its basis her Majesty's residence abroad.' The queen consented to negotiate on this basis, and proposed that the matters in dispute should be referred to some person or persons of high station and character; and the protracted correspondence resulted in the appointment of the Duke of Wellington and Lord Castlereagh on one side, and of Lord Fitzwilliam and Lord Sefton on the other, to arbitrate between the king and queen.

The arbitrators met at Lord Fitzwilliam's house in Grosvenor Square. They all thought it necessary to attend in Court dress; but they did not think it necessary to be particular as to time. The Duke of Wellington, with his usual good sense, saw that Lords Fitzwilliam and Sefton were merely puppets in Brougham's hands, and declared that the affair could never go on unless they were replaced by the queen's natural advisers, Brougham and Denman. The duke's proposal was agreed to, and the conference was adjourned to Lord Castlereagh's house in St. James's Square. Lord Castlereagh was 'covered with stars, diamonds, and ribands; the Duke of Welling-

ton was equally splendid.' Brougham and Denman were in plain clothes. Five separate conferences were held on five successive days, and five elaborate protocols were drawn up. But the conferences proved as abortive as any sober person might from the first have foreseen that they would be. 'It was plain from the first' that the Duke and Lord Castlereagh 'had nothing like full powers from the king.' Brougham himself admitted that he and Denman had not full powers from the queen. Fettered in their action, there is no wonder that the negotiators should have failed; the only cause for surprise is that men should have consented to negotiate on such terms.

At the very first conference Brougham dexterously raised the point on which the negotiation was ultimately broken off. 'Speaking of some expedient to reconcile her Majesty to a stipulation that she should reside on the Continent, to which he merely said that she had no insuperable objection, he suggested in a sort of hurried whisper that the restoration of her name to the Liturgy might answer that purpose. Lord Castlereagh promptly replied, "You might as easily move Carlton House."' And with this answer the conference might, in reality, have broken up. But the negotiators went on negotiating for four days more. In the course of the negotiation the concessions made by the king were various and great. 'The name and rights of a queen were granted to her Majesty without reserve. A royal yacht, a frigate, &c., were offered 'for her journey.' It was agreed that her name and rank should be notified at the Court either of Rome or Milan, the capitals of the countries in which she had expressed her intention to reside; and that an address should be presented to the queen, no less than another to the king, to 'thank her Majesty for having acceded to the wish of the House of Commons.'[1] These conces-

[1] Wilberforce, vol. v. p 56. Cf. *Ann. Reg.*, 1820, Hist., pp. 158–167. Brougham, vol. ii. p. 375. Denman, vol. i. p. 154.

CHAP. VI.

1820.

sions, if they had been made ten days sooner, would probably have prevented the queen's journey to England. If they had been accompanied by the graceful insertion of the queen's name in the Liturgy, they would have satisfied all parties, and averted the scandal, which was daily coming nearer. The Ministry had the folly to take their stand on 'trifles light as air.' Never had the danger of civil war been risked for so trivial an object.

Failure of the negotiation.

Parliament, in the meanwhile, had held its hand, anxiously awaiting the result of the negotiation. On Monday, the 19th of June, the Ministry had the mortification to announce in both Houses that the negotiation had failed. On the following day, Wilberforce, who had already acted as peace-maker, rose to announce his intention of making a motion on the subject. No one knew what his intended motion was; wrapping himself up in mystery, he declined to disclose its terms, and both parties were obliged to wait for its disclosure. Wilberforce really desired the restoration of the queen's name to the Liturgy. The fact that he should have so desired it is a strong proof that the concession should have been made. But Wilberforce refrained from moving an address to the king with this object. The king, it was certain, would not yield; and, if the king would not yield, the only chance of an arrangement depended on the queen's giving way. Wilberforce saw the difficulty which prevented the queen from surrendering her claim. But he adroitly concluded that, though the queen could not yield her claim to the king, she might waive it at the request of the House of Commons. With this view he drew up an address to be presented to the queen. He found a seconder in Stuart Wortley, the great Yorkshire magnate, who had succeeded him in the representation of the Northern county, and whose vast possessions ultimately won a barony for himself and an earldom for his grandson. The proposal led to a singularly able debate. In

the course of it Denman used the memorable words which made so great an impression on the House and the country. It had been suggested that, 'though all particular mention of the queen's name was omitted from the Liturgy, she might yet be considered as being comprised in the general prayer for the royal family.' 'If her Majesty,' he replied, 'was included in any general prayer, it was in the prayer for all who are desolate and oppressed.'

Subsequent failure of Wilberforce.

Wilberforce's motion was carried by 391 votes to 124.[1] Wilberforce, Stuart Wortley, and Sir Thomas Acland were deputed to carry it on the following Saturday to the queen. It was doubtful what the queen would do. 'She will accede to your address, I pledge myself,' Brougham had written to Wilberforce. Her counsel unanimously declined to offer her any advice on the subject. An immense mob, collected before her door, anxiously awaited her decision, and amused themselves in the interim by hooting Wilberforce and his fellow-peacemakers. For a few minutes the result was uncertain. The queen then announced to her advisers her solemn determination to reject Wilberforce's proposition. The form of the answer, which she had herself prepared, was hurriedly corrected by Brougham and Denman. The deputation was called in, and received the queen's reply. Her decision was greeted with enthusiastic cheering by the mob which surrounded her door.

First proceedings in the House of Lords.

The baffled mediators had nothing left to do but to announce the failure of their mission. Their failure left the Ministry no alternative but to proceed against the queen. They had committed themselves to the demands of the king so far that they could not, now that there was no longer a chance of an arrangement, avoid going farther. Another scene in the strange drama had concluded, and a new one was about to begin. Two days after the failure of the mediation, the queen presented a

[1] *Hansard*, New Series, vol. i. pp. 1185, 1270, 1314.

CHAP. VI. 1820.

petition to the House of Lords protesting against the institution of a secret inquiry into her conduct. On the motion of Lord Dacre counsel were called in, and heard in support of her prayer. Brougham and Denman contended that all the proceedings should be delayed till after the arrival of the witnesses for the queen. Until these 'witnesses arrived they could not become sufficiently acquainted with the habits and character of the witnesses against his illustrious client to cross-examine them to any useful purpose.' Denman, in the course of his speech, referred to the process by which the evidence against the queen had been collected; and applied to Leach, who notoriously desired the Chancellorship, Emilia's description of 'Iago'—

> I will be hanged, if some eternal villain,
> Some busy and insinuating rogue,
> Some cogging, cozening slave, to get some office,
> Have not devised this slander.

Lord Eldon was delighted with this attack upon Leach, and the public were equally amused at it. Two months after the speech in the Lords, 'Othello' was played at Drury Lane, and the passage was received with raptures of applause. In Emilia's succeeding speech—

> Why should he call her whore? who keeps her company?
> What place? what time? what form? what likelihood?
> The Moor's abus'd by some most villanous knave,
> Some base notorious knave, some scurvy fellow.
> O, heaven, that such companions thou 'dst unfold;
> And put in every honest hand a whip,
> To lash the rascals naked through the world,
> Even from the east to the west!—

the applause was redoubled. 'The pit twice stood up and cheered; the men waved their hats, the women their handkerchiefs; and the acclamations throughout the whole house were loud and general, and lasted for several minutes.'[1]

[1] *Ann. Reg.*, 1820, Hist., p. 392. *Hansard*, New Series, vol. i. pp. 1323–1338.

Popular demonstrations of this character ought to have warned the Government of the folly of the course which they were pursuing. But nothing could turn the king from his violent resolution to degrade his wife; and the Ministry had not the courage to withstand their sovereign. Brougham and Denman's application was rejected; the 'green bag' was referred to a secret committee; and the committee, on the 4th of July, reported that the charges deeply 'affect not only the honour of the queen, but also the dignity of the Crown and the moral feeling and honour of the country. In their opinion it is indispensable that they should become the subject of a solemn inquiry, which it appears to the committee may be best effected in the course of a legislative proceeding.' On the following day Lord Liverpool introduced a bill 'to deprive her Majesty Queen Caroline Amelia Elizabeth of the title, prerogative rights, privileges, and exemptions of Queen Consort of this realm, and to dissolve the marriage between his Majesty and the said Caroline Amelia Elizabeth.'[1] The bill was immediately read a first time, and the second reading fixed for the 17th of August.

The secret committee's report.

The strength of the popular feeling in the queen's favour became every day more marked. Addresses poured in upon her Majesty from all classes of the English people. The Common Council of the City of London formally petitioned both houses of Parliament to give up the bill. One of the members of the Council insisted, amidst rapturous applause, that there should be 'no royal way of evading the obligations of married life.' When the queen took a drive in the Park the people removed the horses from her carriage and drew it themselves. When the Princess Elizabeth's carriage met the queen's the mob peremptorily commanded the princess's

The feeling of the populace and the reception of the witnesses.

[1] *Hansard*, New Series, vol. ii. pp. 168, 211, where the Bill of Pains and Penalties will be found.

CHAP. VI. 1820.

servants to uncover. But the strength of the popular feeling was not thoroughly seen till after the arrival of the witnesses against the queen. The first batch of these unhappy men landed at Dover on the 7th of July. The people set upon them, 'beat them unmercifully, venting all the while the deepest execrations against them.' They were removed by stealth to London, and lodged during the trial in some temporary buildings in Cotton Yard. Cotton Yard, long since swept away, was in the immediate neighbourhood of the Houses of Parliament. The only direct communication which it had with the street was effectually closed by strong doors bound with iron. Ingress from the river side of Parliament Stairs was as effectually barred by a brick wall and a strong timber partition. And a new causeway, also closely fortified, projecting to low water mark, formed the only means of communication between the outer world and the imprisoned witnesses.[1]

The Queen's reception on the 17th of August.

If precautions were necessary to defend the witnesses against the queen from the violence of the mob, still greater precautions were requisite to avert a popular disturbance on the 17th of August. It was certain that a vast crowd would be collected to witness the commencement of the proceedings; it was possible that violence might be attempted by the populace. Troops were consequently quietly pushed forward towards the metropolis; a large body of artillery was moved up from Woolwich; the Surrey Horse Patrol was quartered in the livery stables opposite Astley's Theatre, in the Westminster Bridge Road; special constables were sworn in to keep the approach to the House of Lords; and two barriers, consisting of massive pieces of timber, were stretched across New Palace Yard from St. Margaret's Church to the King's Bench Record Office. On the morning of the 17th the whole line of the Westminster

[1] *Ann. Reg.*, 1820, Chron., pp. 244, 255, 365.

Road was patrolled by the City Light Horse. The Horse Police occupied Parliament Street and Whitehall; two regiments of Life Guards were stationed in Palace Yard, and the Coldstreams were marched into Westminster Hall, where a powerful train of field-pieces was stationed. But the imposing display of military force was lost in the vast crowd by which the streets were thronged. From St. James's Square, where her Majesty had slept on the previous evening, through Pall Mall, Charing Cross, Whitehall, Parliament Street, and Palace Yard the crowd formed one uniform, compact, and unbroken body. The windows and roofs of the houses which lined the route were thronged by anxious, sympathising spectators. London had never seen so vast a crowd.

The people, however, were not riotous. They hooted the Duke of Wellington; they cheered the Duke of Sussex; they called on the Guards to remember their queen: but they attempted no hostile demonstration; they inflicted no injury on anyone. From eight o'clock in the morning till ten the vast crowd continued to increase. A little before ten a universal cheer announced that the queen had left her house. Her Majesty, who was in an open carriage, drawn by six horses, and who was attended by Lady Anne Hamilton, proceeded slowly through the people. The sentinels at Carlton House presented arms to her, and were cheered for doing so. The shouts, which greeted her throughout her progress, were said by one who was present to be the loudest he had ever heard. The living mass which surrounded her Majesty's carriage thronged after it as it rolled slowly away. The strong barriers at St. Margaret's Church snapped in an instant before the irresistible pressure of the crowd. The mechanical contrivances which the Government had prepared proved inadequate for the occasion. Nothing but the good humour of the multitude averted

CHAP. VI.

1820.

a more serious castastrophe than the rupture of a wooden barrier.

Scene in the Lords.

The scene which was presented inside the House throughout the trial was of the most imposing character. Two galleries, each containing two rows of seats, had been temporarily constructed on either side of the chamber for the accommodation of the peers who should be unable to find room in the House itself. In the body of the House two-thirds of the space usually allotted to strangers were assigned to the counsel, the solicitors, and the witnesses engaged or called on either side. The queen herself occupied the seat immediately adjoining the bar which was usually allotted to the bishop who was not a peer—the Bishop of Sodor and Man. A chair of state, covered with crimson velvet, and adorned with gilt mouldings, was placed there for her accommodation. She was dressed in black, but a rich white lace veil 'flowed gracefully over her shoulders and hung like an antique vestment over her dress.' Her chair faced the throne, the woolsack, the table, the peers, and, it may be added, the members of the other House of Parliament, who were accommodated with places in the space adjoining the throne. Rarely before had so memorable an assemblage been collected in so comparatively small a space. There was the Duke of York, heir-presumptive to the throne of England, himself only eleven years previously the subject of an inquiry as damaging as that to which his sister-in-law the queen was now exposed. There was the Duke of Clarence, busily whispering in the ears of his brother peers the basest insinuations against the character of his sister-in-law. There was the Duke of Sussex, alone among his family eager to be excused the invidious task of judging between his brother and his brother's wife. There were the four peers, Lord Grenville, Lord Spencer, Lord Ellenborough, and Lord Erskine, who had solemnly acquitted the queen of the

grave charges brought against her in 1806. There were the members of the secret committee who had just recommended the institution of the present proceedings against her Majesty—a Chancellor, once her Majesty's firm friend, now her reluctant accuser; a Prime Minister, driven into the proceedings against his better judgment from a culpable dislike to displease his sovereign; a Home Secretary, who, as a member of the Talents Administration, had been a party to the proceedings of 1806; a President of the Council, who had deferred to the decision of the Government; a primate, a bishop, and half a dozen other dukes, marquises, earls, and barons. There was the great captain whose incomparable skill had brought the most terrible of modern wars to a victorious issue, subjected for a time to the unreasonable hostility of the populace, from the part which he had taken against the queen. There was the Duke of Hamilton, generously leaning to his sister's mistress. There was Lord Lauderdale, criticising in the broadest of Scotch the provincial Italianisms of the Lombard witnesses. There, mingled on one solemn judgment-seat, were accusers who had made up their minds already, and judges who were open to conviction. There were peers who owed their titles to the king, peers who were expecting further honours from him, peers who held emoluments at his will and pleasure, peers who were hoping for fresh favours from their sovereign—met together, at the will of their king, to pronounce judgment on the honour and character of their queen.[1]

The counsel.

The spectators instinctively turned their eyes to the judges. Posterity perhaps feels as great an interest in the plain knot of lawyers behind the bar. There, on one side, stood the Attorney-General, Sir Robert Gifford; the Solicitor-General, Sir John Copley; the king's Advocate-General, Sir Christopher Robinson; Dr. Adams, a civilian;

[1] *Ann. Reg.*, 1820, Chron., pp. 62, 366, 376, 381.

CHAP. VI. 1820.

and Mr. Parker, an 'outer barrister.' There, on the other side, stood Brougham, Denman, Lushington, Williams, Tindal, and Wilde. The prizes of the profession seemed at the feet of the fortunate lawyers who were retained on the king's side. Everything that the Court could do to retard the promotion of the advisers of the queen was certain to be done. Yet the counsel for the queen attained on the whole higher positions, both in their profession and in the State, than those for the king. On the king's side Sir John Copley became Lord Chancellor; Gifford became Master of the Rolls and a peer; Parke a judge of the King's Bench, a baron of the Exchequer, and Lord Wensleydale. On the queen's side Brougham, the leader, became Chancellor; Wilde, the junior, rose also to the Chancellorship; Denman became Chief Justice of the King's Bench, Tindal Chief Justice of the Court of Common Pleas, Lushington a judge of the High Court of Admiralty, and Williams a justice of the Queen's Bench. Rarely had any client been defended by counsel destined for such distinction as those who were retained for the queen.

The trial.

The trial—for such it really was—was delayed at the outset. Lord Carnarvon had the address to elicit a formal opinion from the judges that the queen, even if she were guilty of adultery with a foreigner, had not committed high treason within the meaning of the Act of Edward III.[1] On the motion of Lord Kenyon the queen's counsel were heard against the principle of the bill; and the 17th, 18th, and 19th of August were mainly occupied with the speeches of Brougham and Denman on the one side, and with the replies of the Attorney and Solicitor-General on the other. On the 19th of August the Attorney-General opened the case for the Crown, and on the next day the examination of the witnesses began.

[1] *Hansard*, New Series, vol. ii. p. 632.

The first witness for the bill was one Theodore Majocchi. Majocchi had been a fellow-servant of Bergami's in Marshal Pino's service; and he had been subsequently engaged by Bergami as valet to the queen. He had lived in her Majesty's service throughout her stay in Italy; he had accompanied her in her voyage to the East, and he had necessarily had many opportunities of closely observing her conduct. When Majocchi was called the queen rose in manifest agitation, exclaiming, 'Teodoro, no! no!' or 'Tradidore, no! no!' and hurried from the House. Her Majesty's evident agitation naturally created a profound impression; and the impression was indubitably increased as Majocchi's examination proceeded. His statements were very clear; his memory very accurate; and his story very damaging. His examination was purposely protracted by Copley throughout the whole of the day, and the peers separated in the evening, profoundly impressed with the immorality of their queen. Brougham rose on the following morning to cross-examine the witness. A trivial question of little moment, purposely designed to test the accuracy of his memory, elicited the hesitating reply, '*Non mi ricordo*' (I do not remember). Brougham saw his advantage, and rapidly plied the witness with a series of questions, to the majority of which he received the same answer, '*Non mi ricordo; non mi ricordo.*' The witness's memory was effectually discredited by the process, and the expression '*Non mi ricordo*' passed into the by-word which it has ever since continued. When the queen, in the following month, made an excursion by water from her house at Hammersmith to Greenwich, the people, as her barge passed Westminster, raised the appropriate shout, '*Non mi ricordo.*' When Sir Walter Scott was attacked by the Duke of Clarence on the authorship of the 'Waverley Novels,' he replied, 'I must give your

CHAP. VI.

Royal Highness the favourite answer of the day, "*Non mi ricordo.*"[1]

1820.

The examination of the witnesses against the queen lasted until the 7th of September. The Solicitor-General, Copley, summed up the evidence; and the House adjourned for three weeks, to enable the queen's counsel to prepare their reply. In the interval the popular sympathy for the queen continued to be loudly expressed. The sailors in the merchant service marched through the City with an address to her. Every important town presented their addresses of congratulation. That from Liverpool contained 30,000 signatures; and more than 11,000 ladies of Sheffield signed another. Lord Eldon, posting home to Dorsetshire, was mobbed at Ringwood. Denman, passing his holiday at Cheltenham, was drawn triumphantly into the town. The mob judged everyone by his declared opinions on the queen's case. It was a serious matter to reside in the neighbourhood of her Majesty. The Ministry were induced to promise to purchase the queen a house, and a list of suitable residences was sent to her to select from. She chose one in Piccadilly; but she was informed that it could not be obtained. She selected another, in St. James's Square; but that was also declared unobtainable. She was offered a third, in Hamilton Place, and accepted the offer; but the house had already found another purchaser. The residences of the Duke of Gloucester, of Lord Castlereagh, and of Lord Eldon were respectively adjacent to these houses.[2]

The defence.

The peers reassembled on the 3rd of October, and Brougham opened the case for the queen. His speech was 'one of the most powerful orations that ever proceeded from human lips.' Nothing has ever exceeded the

[1] *Ann. Reg.*, 1820, Chron., p. 404. Brougham, vol. ii. p. 415. *Hansard*, New Series, vol. ii. p. 804.

[2] *Ann. Reg.*, 1820, Chron., pp. 407, 414, 415, 423. Arnould's *Denman*, vol. i. p. 165. Eldon, vol. ii. pp. 385, 386. Lord Eldon threatened to resign the Chancellorship if the Hamilton Place house were bought.

magnificence of his peroration: 'My lords, I pray you to pause. I do earnestly beseech you to take heed. You are standing upon the brink of a precipice: then beware! It will go forth your judgment, if sentence shall go against the queen. But it will be the only judgment you ever pronounced which, instead of reaching its object, will return and bound back against those who gave it. Save the country, my lords, from the horrors of this catastrophe; save yourselves from this peril; rescue the country, of which you are the ornaments, but in which you can flourish no longer, when severed from the people, than the blossom when cut off from the roots and the stem of the tree. Save that country, that you may continue to adorn it; save the crown, which is in jeopardy; the aristocracy, which is shaken; save the altar, which must stagger from the blow that rends the kindred throne. You have said, my lords, you have willed—the Church and the King have willed—that the Queen should be deprived of its solemn service. She has, instead of that solemnity, the heartfelt prayers of the people. She wants no prayers of mine. But I do here pour forth my humble supplications at the Throne of Mercy that that mercy may be poured down upon the people in a larger measure than the merits of their rulers may deserve, and that your hearts may be turned to justice.' The effects of this magnificent peroration were prodigious. 'His arguments, his observations, his tones, his attitude, his eye, left an impression on my mind,' wrote Denman, 'which is scarcely ever renewed without exciting the strongest emotion. Erskine rushed out of the House in tears.'[1]

CHAP. VI. 1820.

On the 5th of October the House proceeded to hear the queen's witnesses, and their examination was not concluded till the 24th. There can be very little question

[1] Denman, vol. i. p. 169. For the peroration see Brougham, vol. ii. p. 399, and cf. *Hansard*, New Series, vol. iii. p. 210.

CHAP. VI.

1820.

that the witnesses summoned for the queen enjoyed a higher social status than those who had been examined against her. The most material witnesses against her Majesty were Teodoro Majocchi, her Italian valet; and Louise Demont, a Swiss maid; Gargiulo, a captain, and Paturzo, a mate, in the Neapolitan mercantile marine; Barbara Kress, a waiting-maid at Carlsruhe; Raggazoni, an Italian mason; and Restelli, a superintendent of the stables. Majocchi's evidence was discredited by his '*Non mi ricordo.*' Demont, after having placed the most injurious construction on her mistress's character, was proved to have written her the most flattering letters, and to have used her utmost endeavours to obtain for a young sister a situation in her Majesty's service. Raggazoni was proved to have been bribed by Restelli; and Restelli, after concluding his testimony, was sent out of the country; and it was proved that Powell, the solicitor for the bill, and a member of the Milan Commission, had sent him away.

Restelli's absence probably did more good to the queen's cause than any other circumstance. Her counsel had a right to remonstrate on the absence of an essential witness, whom, on every principle of justice, the king's advisers on the other side were bound to have retained in the country. Indirectly, too, Restelli's absence gave Brougham an opportunity for making a formidable attack on the king. Powell was called by the peers to account for Restelli's disappearance; and, after he had been examined by Lord Grey, Lord Carnarvon, and others, Brougham rose to cross-examine him. His first question, 'Who is your employer or client in this case?' elicited shouts of 'No! no!' from the peers. Brougham maintained, in an elaborate argument, the propriety of the question: 'I have never been able to trace the local habitation or the name of the unknown being who is the plaintiff in this proceeding. I know not but it may

vanish into thin air—I know not under what shape it exists;' and he then proceeded to declaim with magnificent effect Milton's description of Satan, in 'Paradise Lost:'—

> If shape it might be call'd, that shape had none
> Distinguishable in member, joint, or limb;
> Or substance might be call'd, that shadow seemed,
> For each seemed either. What seem'd his head
> The likeness of a kingly crown had on.[1]

The queen's witnesses were, it has already been stated, of high position. Mr. St. Leger, Sir William Gell, and Mr. Keppel Craven, her chamberlains; Lady Charlotte Lindsay, her lady of the bedchamber; Dr. Holland, her physician, were witnesses of undeniable status, and contradicted or explained much of the most damaging evidence which had been produced against their mistress. Their testimony may be cited to refute all the charges preferred against the queen's conduct during the whole of the time during which these witnesses were with her Majesty. Unfortunately, however, they all of them left the queen's service at a very early period; and they were none of them able to speak to the events which had happened on board the polacre, and in the course of the queen's journey to the East. For that part of her case she was compelled to rely on the evidence of two gentlemen who had been officers in the Royal Navy, Lieutenant Flinn—a witness who fainted on being pressed in his cross-examination—and Lieutenant Hownam, who made a damaging admission. The evidence of these two gentlemen, and especially of Lieutenant Hownam, did the queen

The queen's witnesses.

[1] The quotation was suggested to Brougham by Spencer Perceval, the eldest son of Perceval, the Prime Minister, then a young man of twenty-four years of age. Brougham, in his opening speech, on the 3rd October, had paid a very handsome and well-deserved compliment to the protection which the Princess of Wales had always derived from Perceval, 'her firm, dauntless, and most able advocate.' Young Perceval repaid the compliment by supplying a quotation, which has been connected ever since with the name of Brougham, and which George IV. felt more severely than, with one exception, any incident in the trial.—*Hansard*, New Series, vol. iii. p. 241. Greville's *Memoirs*, vol. i. p. 38.

CHAP. VI.

1820.

more harm than all the testimony furnished by the other side.

Denman's speech.

The examination of the witnesses was not concluded until the 24th of October. Late on that day Denman rose to sum up the evidence on behalf of the queen. His speech, which was delivered on two days, occupied ten hours. It was very eloquent, very independent, and very able. The advocate displayed his independence and earned the undying hostility of the king by comparing the queen to Octavia, the wife of Nero; and by quoting the retort which one of Octavia's maids returned to Tigellinus, who was presiding at her examination and torture. The retort implied an imputation which George IV., with all his faults, did not deserve, and which Denman, excited as he was, should not have made. The advocate showed his independence still further by an uncompromising attack on the Duke of Clarence, who had been industriously circulating the most atrocious stories against the queen. 'I know that rumours are abroad of the most vague but, at the same time, most injurious character. We have heard and hear daily with alarm that there are persons, and these not of the lowest condition, not even excluded from this august assembly, who are industriously circulating the most odious calumnies against her Majesty. Can this thing be? We know that if a juryman on such an occasion should affect to possess any knowledge on the subject of inquiry we should have a right to call him to the bar as a witness. "Come forward," we might say, "and let us confront you with our evidence." But to any man who could even be suspected of so base a practice as whispering calumnies to judges the queen might well exclaim, "Come forth, thou slanderer, and let me see thy face! If thou wouldst equal the respectability of an Italian witness, come forth and depose in open court. As thou art thou art worse than an Italian assassin! be-

cause, while I am boldly and manfully meeting my accusers, thou art planting a dagger unseen in my bosom, and converting thy poisoned stiletto into the semblance of the sword of justice."' It is stated that Denman, while he made this attack, looked steadfastly at the part of the gallery in which the Duke of Clarence was seated, and that he raised his voice 'till the old roof rang again, and a thrill of irrepressible emotion pervaded every heart in the densely crowded assembly.' It is a striking illustration of the difference between the character of the two brothers that the king never forgave Denman's imputation; while the Duke of Clarence generously forgot the advocate's attack on him.[1]

The conclusion of Denman's speech was less happy. 'If your lordships have been furnished with powers which scarcely Omniscience possesses for coming at the secrets of this female, you will think that it is your duty to imitate the justice, beneficence, and wisdom of that benignant Being who, not in a case like this, where innocence is manifest, but when guilt was detected and vice revealed, said: "If no one come forward to condemn thee, neither do I condemn thee. Go and sin no more."' The conclusion was almost as faulty as the logic of the mob which gave three cheers for Mr. Austin, the queen's son. It suggested an admirable epigram to some wit:—

> Most gracious Queen, we thee implore
> To go away, and sin no more;
> But, if that effort be too great,
> To go away at any rate.[2]

Denman concluded his speech on the 25th of October. The remainder of the month was occupied with the arguments of Lushington, who followed him, and with the replies of the Attorney-General, Gifford, and of the Soli-

The bill passes its second reading.

[1] Arnould's *Denman*, vol. i. p. 177. *Ann. Reg.*, 1820, Chron., p. 1132. *Hansard*, vol. iii. pp. 1090, 1181.

[2] Arnould's *Denman*, vol. i. p. 172. *Ann. Reg.*, 1820, Chron., p. 1134. Colchester, vol. iii. p. 181.

CHAP. VI. 1820.

citor-General, Copley. The Attorney-General had been previously thought to have mismanaged the case; but his reply redeemed his credit and restored, by the power of his advocacy, a tottering cause. For four days, during the commencement of November, the peers proceeded to debate the propriety of assenting to the principle of the bill. The second reading was carried by 123 votes to 95. The majority was comparatively small. It made the fate of the bill doubtful; but it left no doubt as to the opinion which the peers had formed of the queen's guilt. It was well said at the time that no peer who was not satisfied that the queen was guilty voted for the second reading; but that a great many peers who firmly believed in her guilt thought the measure inexpedient, and therefore voted against it. Lord Harewood, Lord Falmouth, Lord Calthorpe, Lord de Clifford, Lord Grantham, Lord Gosford, for example, all expressed themselves satisfied that the queen was guilty, but all of them voted against the second reading. Lord Ellenborough declared amidst loud cheers that the Queen of England was 'the last woman in the country' whom 'a man of honour would wish his wife to resemble;' but he declined to support the bill. The majority which the Ministry secured was partly obtained by a promise that the divorce clause should be dropped. The vast majority of the Lords were undoubtedly clear that the queen was guilty, though only a very small majority were willing to assent to the propriety of the proceedings against her.

The bill is abandoned.

The subsequent stages of the bill were rapidly passed through. The debate in committee, however, gave rise to some curious tactics. Lord Liverpool had offered to drop the divorce clause for the sake of conciliating support; but the Opposition were, of course, anxious to deprive the Ministry of the chance of conciliating their supporters, and consequently were desirous of retaining the clause. Some of the Ministerial party, moreover,

ready to proceed against her Majesty to all extremes, were unwilling to omit a single penalty. For these reasons her Majesty's warmest friends and her hottest opponents were both agreed in retaining the clause, and they carried its retention against the Ministry by a very large majority. The effects of this policy were apparent on the division on the third reading. The opponents of the bill increased from 95 to 99; the supporters of the measure dwindled from 123 to 108. The queen hurriedly withdrew with Denman to prepare a petition to be heard by counsel against the bill passing, and her Majesty, in signing it, used the memorable words, 'Regina in spite of them.' But the vote had, in reality, been decisive of the fate of the measure. Lord Liverpool saw the folly of attempting to proceed with so narrow a majority, and rose to propose that the further consideration of the bill be adjourned to that day six months. The House assented with pleasure to a motion which gave a term to proceedings which were distasteful to almost every peer.

The abandonment of the bill was hailed with exultation in the country. London was illuminated for three successive nights. Dublin, Edinburgh, and many of the chief towns followed the example of the capital. The mail coaches arrived at Bath, men and horses covered with white favours. 'The City of London passed a vote of thanks to Brougham, Denman, and Lushington, and resolved that the freedom of the City should be presented to them in commemoration of their splendid and successful exertions.' The queen proceeded in state to St. Paul's to return thanks for her success. The Strand, Fleet Street, and Ludgate Hill were crowded with spectators; the neighbouring houses were thronged. As much as two guineas is said to have been given for a single seat at a window.[1] Her Majesty was received with an enthusiasm

[1] *Ann. Reg.*, 1820, Chron., pp. 486, 500, 503. Wilberforce, vol. v. p. 80. Denman, vol. ii. p. 179, 180.

CHAP. VI. 1820.

The queen's dejection.

which exceeded every previous demonstration. The visit to St. Paul's commemorates, in fact, the period of her greatest popularity. The air was ringing with the acclamations of the mob; steadfast friends and scheming courtiers were pouring their congratulations upon her Majesty; deputations were honouring her with addresses; the people were welcoming her approach—and the queen, for the first time, was dejected and unhappy. She, who had dared king, ministers, and lords; she, who had signed herself 'Regina in spite of them'; she, who had listened day after day to the evidence, true and false, brought against her; she, whose courage had faced dangers and disclosures which would have scared away ninety-nine women out of every hundred, broke down under her triumph. 'I do indeed feel thankful,' she wrote, in the only affecting letter ever composed by her; '*mais hélas*, it comes too late. Her who would have rejoiced wid me at her moder's triumph is losset to me. . . . No one, in fact, care for me; and this business has been more cared for as a political affair, dan as de cause of a poor forlorn woman. . . . I feel very unwell, fatigued, and *ébayé*: I wonder my head is not quite bewildered wid all I have suffered—and it is not over yet wid me. . . . Many people call on me now who never did before. . . . I will not quarrel with their respect, though it is shown me rather late in de day, and when they cannot well help it.'

One woman had not, however, waited till 'rather late in de day' to show her respect to her unhappy queen. Lady Anne Hamilton had been an old friend of her royal mistress; but she had been one of the least favoured among her mistress's suite. 'She is so full of old maid's whims and prudery, it is quite tiresome to be under her surveillance.' 'Mein Gott, she is wearisome sometimes. Job would have got into a passion wid her, I am sure.' 'No hopes of getting the *dragonne* married; no one will venture to espouse Joan of Arc. Dey are all afraid of de

Amazon, and I am not much surprised.' So wrote the princess in 1814. But, in 1820, Lady Anne Hamilton was the only woman who stood firmly by the queen. On her Majesty's arrival in London she consented to sit in her carriage with her back to the horses, while Alderman Wood, with excessively bad taste, occupied the seat by the queen's side. Throughout the whole of the trial the *dragonne de virtue* sat by her Majesty. 'Poor Joan of Arc,' wrote the queen, her better nature aroused by this touching fidelity, 'has really proved herself true to de name I used to give her *pour me moquer d'elle.* She has staid wid me through it all, and God he knows dat was no small trial. Poor soul, I hope he will reward her for her courage.'[1] CHAP. VI. 1820.

The mob, however, who cheered the queen on every possible occasion, knew nothing of these touching traits in her character. They applauded her courage, they reprobated the treatment to which she was exposed, and they had neither thought nor regard for any other consideration. The queen's popularity was, indeed, for the moment, increased by another circumstance. The House of Commons had been adjourned to the 23rd of November. The House met on that day at two o'clock, and Denman rose at once with the object of presenting a communication from the queen. As he rose Black Rod entered the House. Mingled shouts of 'Denman!' 'Withdraw!' 'Shame!' prevented a word of Black Rod's message being audible. Tierney, when Black Rod had retired, declared that nothing that had fallen from him had been heard, and that the purport of his message could not, therefore, be known. The Speaker, however, rose from his chair and proceeded to the Lords, followed by Castlereagh, Vansittart, and other members; and, amidst a scene of almost unparalleled excitement, Parliament was prorogued. The Ministry gained little by this discredit- Parliament prorogued.

[1] *Diary*, vol. iv. pp. 60, 77, 79, 93.

CHAP. VI. 1820.

able manœuvre. The delivery of the queen's message was prevented; but the message itself was, of course, immediately published. The queen stated in it that she had received a communication from the king's ministers, plainly intimating an intention to prorogue the Parliament immediately, and accompanied with an offer for her support, and for providing her with a residence until a new session could be holden.' 'This offer,' the queen added, she had had 'no hesitation in refusing,' as she 'felt that she could no longer receive from the ministers what she is well assured the liberality of the House of Commons would have granted, as alike essential to the dignity of the throne and demanded by the plainest principle of justice.'

Demonstrations in the recess.

So ended the memorable session of 1820. During the short recess, which followed it, both parties endeavoured to obtain some expressions of popular support. On the queen's side, indeed, little endeavour had to be made. Addresses poured in upon her from every part of the country; and all classes and both sexes united in congratulating her. But there was a quiet minority on the king's side desirous of making a counter-demonstration. Private meetings, composed of persons in a respectable position, met and drew up loyal addresses to his Majesty. The queen's friends declared that the king's supporters were 'hole-and-corner' men. The king's friends, to a certain extent, acknowledged the justice of the charge by endeavouring to prevent the assembly of county meetings, and by packing the few meetings which they themselves attended. Packed meetings, summoned by the king's supporters, moreover, declined, in some cases, to allow the queen's friends a hearing. In Cheshire the sheriff refused to put to the meeting an amendment to the address, proposed by the queen's friends; and in Dublin the sheriff declined to allow the queen's friends a hearing, and threatened to call in the

military to his support.[1] These proceedings naturally exasperated the queen's supporters. The Duke of Wellington subsequently increased their exasperation by declaring that the public opinion of Hampshire was already sufficiently expressed, and that it was unnecessary to go through the 'farce of a county meeting.' This unfortunate phrase increased the irritation among the Opposition. They endeavoured to infer from the duke's expression that the Ministry regarded county meetings 'as mere farces.' Words justifying such an inference would have been unfortunate in the case of any Ministry. They were doubly unfortunate when they were used by a minister who had been a party to the Six Acts. CHAP. VI. 1820.

Before the irritation which these events occasioned had subsided Parliament met, on the 23rd of January, 1821. But the Ministry were unable to meet their supporters with an unbroken front. A month before, their only really powerful speaker in the House of Commons had retired from the Cabinet; and the only Cabinet ministers who were left to support Lord Castlereagh in the Lower House were Vansittart and Robinson. Canning was one of the oldest friends whom the queen possessed in this country. He had been in the constant habit of accepting her hospitality at Blackheath and at Kensington, and neither his acceptance of office from the Regent nor the rumours which disturbed the world had destroyed his regard for her Majesty. Those, indeed, who had had the privilege of enjoying her hospitality could hardly avoid remembering with pleasure the hours spent in her company. Her suite were occasionally compelled to witness improprieties which must have been peculiarly distressing to them; but her guests had the privilege of enjoying the very best society in London. The queen delighted in collecting the people who were best worth knowing round her dinner-table, Resignation of Canning.

[1] *Hansard*, New Series, vol. iv. pp. 901–917.

CHAP. VI. 1820.

and she had the art to set them entirely at their ease. Lewis, whose extraordinary romance gained him the nickname of the 'Monk,' Sheridan, Whitbread, Canning, Byron, Lawrence were among her Majesty's guests; the little court at Blackheath and Kensington became, in its way, as sparkling and attractive as the more exalted society at Carlton House. Long after the queen left the country, in 1814, Canning probably recollected with pleasure the agreeable hours which he had spent in her society. She returned; and he found himself a member of the Cabinet forced to consider the propriety of taking proceedings against her. His colleagues understood the difficulty of his position, and proposed that he should remain among them, taking as little part as possible in the proceedings. Canning complied with their desire. He saw with satisfaction the steps which Wilberforce was taking to arrange a compromise; and he clung to the hope that some arrangement might be concluded which might satisfy her Majesty and extricate him from his embarrassing situation. Wilberforce failed; and Canning at once sought an interview with the king and tendered his resignation. The king commanded him to remain in office, abstaining as completely as he might think fit from any share in the proceedings against the queen;[1] and, with perhaps some misgivings, Canning felt himself compelled to obey his Majesty's commands. He remained in office; and he took no part in the preparation of the Bill of Pains and Penalties; he took no part in the Cabinet discussions to which it led; he even left England during a portion of the autumn. But a Cabinet minister cannot perpetually

[1] The king's commands were given with extreme reluctance, at the instigation of Lord Liverpool. So sure was the king on the subject that he threw his surrender in Lord Liverpool's teeth nine months afterwards. 'The king might also add the instance in which he sacrificed the most painful personal feelings and opinions to the advice and earnest desire of Lord Liverpool that "the king should not accept the resignation of Mr. Canning, but suffer him to remain in his councils," in spite of the very unwarrantable conduct of that gentleman (as a member of the Cabinet) in his place in Parliament.' —Yonge's *Liverpool*, vol. iii. p. 152.

hold aloof from the proceedings of his colleagues. Canning returned to England. The unsavoury subject of her Majesty's position was still in everyone's mouth; and Canning felt it impossible to continue in a Government from which he was so widely separated on the chief topic of the day. He again sought an interview with the king, and again tendered his resignation of office. It was at first intended that the fact of Canning's resignation should be kept private. But a secret, which is known to five or six persons, is usually no secret at all. Some one or other whispered it to the editor of the 'Courier;' the 'Courier' duly announced it in its columns; and Canning was consequently compelled to explain to his constituents his reasons for resigning.[1]

Canning's resignation was the unfortunate but inevitable consequence of the ill-advised and unfortunate proceedings against the queen. The only question which arises on the resignation is not whether Canning's conduct was justifiable in December, but whether he should not have insisted on resigning six months before. Canning, however, had one excuse for not pressing his resignation in the summer. Many public men are ready enough to resign once; but a public man, who has once broken up a Government by his resignation, hesitates to incur the same peril a second time. Canning is the only prominent statesman who in the present century has had the courage to encounter this danger twice. Whatever opinion may be formed of the propriety of his resignation in 1809, he deserves unbounded sympathy in the circumstances which prompted his second retirement from office in 1820. His loss was a serious one to his colleagues. It was, indeed, hoped at first that Peel might be persuaded to fill the place which Canning had vacated. Such an arrangement would undoubtedly have proved most beneficial to the Ministry. Peel already occupied a very dif-

[1] *Ann. Reg.*, 1820, Chron., p. 537

CHAP. VI. 1821.

ferent position from that which he had filled as Chief Secretary of Ireland. He had acquired considerable reputation in office, but he had gained a much higher reputation since his retirement from the Chief Secretaryship. But Peel declined to become the champion of a Ministry which had covered itself with unpopularity; and the Government was consequently compelled to resort to a provisional arrangement, and to give the office which Canning had vacated to Bragge Bathurst, the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster.

Peel refuses to join the Ministry.

Parliament meets.

The Ministry, then, were compelled to meet Parliament without obtaining any fresh accession of strength, 'Never was anything so low and wretched as the Treasury Bench. It is quite disgraceful and contemptible.' So wrote Fremantle, a close observer, to Lord Buckingham. 'As to the Ministers,' said an influential member in the House of Commons, 'they had fully proved their inability to govern; never was the community so universally impressed with the conviction of the incapacity of their responsible rulers as at the present moment; so general was that feeling that all ranks of men looked to their removal as their only hope.'[1] But, contemptible as the Ministry was, the tide was already turning in its favour. It was known that it had been decided to take no further measures against the queen; it was known that it had been decided to offer her a house and an income of 50,000*l.* a year; it was known that it had been decided to couple the grant of this income with no conditions. These resolutions effectually damped the ardour which the public had displayed in the queen's behalf. It was one thing to be enthusiastic for a queen who was the heroine of a divorce bill; it was another thing to be enthusiastic for a lady, who was quietly enjoying an income of 50,000*l.* a year. Nine-tenths of the mob who had

[1] Curran, in debate on the Address. *Hansard*, vol. iv. p. 46. *Memoirs of George IV.*, vol. i. p. 112.

shouted for her Majesty had no decent dwellings of their own; and they could hardly be expected to take an interest in the question whether the queen occupied one of the king's empty palaces or some equally comfortable house. Nine-tenths of the mob, too, probably never entered a church, and they could hardly be expected to take much interest in the question whether her Majesty's name should or should not be inserted in a Liturgy which they never heard. The popularity of the queen, too, declined for another reason. On the advice of Brougham she announced her intention to take no income from Parliament 'while her name continued to be excluded from the Liturgy.'[1] But, though for the moment she adopted this courageous advice, she had not the courage to abide by it. She wrote to Lord Liverpool and asked for an income. These facts were, of course, soon known; and the House of Commons were encouraged by the knowledge of them to dispose rapidly and effectually of the queen's business. One member moved for papers relative to the omission of her Majesty's name from the Litany, and was defeated by 310 votes to 209. Another member moved a vote of censure on the Ministry, and was beaten by 324 votes to 178. A third member moved for the restoration of her Majesty's name to the Prayer Book, and was beaten by 298 votes to 178. The Act authorising the queen's annuity was hurried through Parliament; the Duke of Cambridge's house in South Audley Street was bought for her; and politicians turned with relief from discussing the guilt or innocence of the queen to the measures of internal policy which required their consideration.[2]

Decline of the queen's popularity.

Various reasons, then, tended to diminish the queen's popularity; and, unfortunately, her conduct did not increase her favour among her friends. If there were any

[1] *Hansard*, New Series, vol. iv. pp. 236 238.

[2] Ibid., vol. iv. pp. 139-219, 361-421, 429-510, 620-666.

CHAP. VI. 1821.

one person to whom she was indebted it was Lady Anne Hamilton; but she soon forgot even her obligations in this quarter. Lady Anne Hamilton was made Mistress of the Robes; but her promotion removed her from personal attendance upon the queen. Serious people like Lady Anne were, indeed, ill-fitted for her society. She had lived so long—so she said herself—among Turks, Jews, and infidels, that she was not fit for good company. She gave various entertainments at her house in London; but she did not like being stuck up among fine people. Though she possessed a suitable residence in London, she preferred Brandenburgh House, at Hammersmith, to South Audley Street. At Hammersmith she is said to have received a succession of Italian visitors of no very high order.[1] There were few English people whom she cared to invite to her house, or who cared to receive her invitations.

The coronation decided on.

Preparations were, however, in the meanwhile being made for the coronation of George IV. It had originally been intended that the king should have been crowned on the 1st of August, 1820. The most elaborate arrangements had been made for the ceremony. A new crown, worth 54,000*l.*, had been ordered for his Majesty to wear. Magnificent dresses, involving inordinate expense, had been ordered for his suite.[2] The officials at the Board of Works had hunted for precedents as to the course pursued on previous occasions, and had relied upon 'Sandford's description of the coronation of James II. as the fullest record of the ceremony.' The interior of Westminster Hall and the interior of Westminster Abbey were transformed under their 'directions,' and everything prepared for an imposing display. The arrival of the

[1] Denman, vol. i. p. 185, 186.

[2] The coronation was estimated to cost 100,000*l.*; it actually cost 238,000*l.*! The *hire* of jewels for the crown—the king choosing to keep them for twenty-two months—cost 11,000*l.* The robes 24,000*l.* (Buckingham's *George IV.*, vol. i. p. 467.) The expense was severely commented on in Parliament.—*Hansard*, New Series, vol. ix. pp. 828, 1106.

queen in England put a sudden stop to these preparations. Orders were issued for the indefinite postponement of the ceremony. But orders, in those days, could be carried only slowly to the distant colonies of the British Empire. The news that the coronation had been postponed did not reach Montreal till after its celebration by the loyal colonists.[1] CHAP. VI. 1821.

Meanwhile, however, the coronation had been indefinitely postponed in this country; but many things had happened since its postponement. The proceedings against the queen had been undertaken; the Bill of Pains and Penalties had been discussed, had been adopted, and had been withdrawn; the whole subject of her Majesty's position had been considered by the House of Commons, and a suitable provision had been made for her. The time had now arrived when it was necessary to resume the suspended arrangements for the coronation of George IV. Workmen were again observed busily preparing Westminster Hall for the ceremony; and, though no official announcement was made, it was evident that the coronation was to take place in the course of the summer. The news that the preparations for the ceremony had been resumed soon found their way to Brandenburgh House. On the 29th of April the queen wrote to the king through Lord Liverpool, announcing her intention of attending the coronation, and requesting his Majesty's orders as to the dress which she should wear, and as to the suite by whom she should be attended during the ceremony. His Majesty's orders were sufficiently explicit. Lord Liverpool was instructed to reply that it was 'his Majesty's prerogative to regulate the ceremonial of his coronation in such manner as he may think fit; that the queen can form no part of that ceremonial, except in consequence of a distinct authority from the king, and that it is not his Majesty's intention, under the present

[1] *Ann. Reg.*, 1820, Chron., pp. 158, 164, 268, 402.

CHAP. VI. 1821.

circumstances, to give any such authority.' The queen protested in reply that she was determined to 'attend.' Lord Liverpool was instructed to answer that it was the royal pleasure that she should not do so; and, with this threat on one side and this rejoinder on the other, the correspondence between the queen and the Prime Minister ended.[1] A month after the termination of the correspondence, or on the 9th of June, a proclamation was signed appointing the 14th of July for the coronation. On the 14th of June the proclamation was read, amidst all the pomp of military display, in Westminster and in the City. The queen's advisers drew up a memorial to the king in council, claiming as of right that the queen should be crowned at the same time as the king; and the memorial was duly referred by his Majesty to the Privy Council.

The queen's claim to be crowned.

The Council met at the Cockpit on Thursday, the 4th of July.[2] The meeting was largely attended. Two royal dukes, York and Clarence, the Duke of Wellington, and other ministers were present at it. One or two bishops were in attendance to give the authority of the Church to the decision of the Council. Some of the judges were in attendance to lend the authority of the Bench to its verdict. Some members of the Opposition and some independent members of Parliament gave an appearance of impartiality to the least impartial of tribunals. Brougham and Denman were heard in support of her Majesty's claim. The Attorney and Solicitor General were heard in reply. The chamber was cleared; their lordships deliberated, and adjourned; they resumed their sitting on the following Tuesday, and, 'after a long and solemn deliberation, decided that the queens consort of this realm are not entitled of right to be crowned at any time.' It followed that 'her Majesty the Queen is not entitled as of right to be crowned at the time specified in her Majesty's memorial.'[3]

[1] Yonge's *Liverpool*, vol. iii. pp. 129–130.

[2] The Privy Council assembled in those days at the Cockpit. The Treasury now stands on its site.

[3] *Ann. Reg.*, 1820, Chron. p. 109.

The queen could hardly have expected any other answer from the tribunal to which her memorial had been referred. But it would have been impossible for any tribunal to have arrived at any other decision. Sentiment may have been in favour of the queen's claim, but precedent was hopelessly against her. All the learning and all the eloquence of Brougham and of Denman were unable to gainsay the stern logic of facts. On only eight occasions since the Conquest had a King and Queen of England been crowned together. On many occasions the queen had never been crowned at all, and on many others she had been crowned long after her husband. It was hopeless, with these facts as they stood, to make out a strong case for the simultaneous coronation of George IV. and Caroline of Brunswick. It would have been much wiser to have abstained from raising the case at all. But the queen's mistakes did not cease with the decision of the Council. The Privy Council had solemnly decided that she had no claim to be crowned; but she still persisted in being present at the coronation. The decision of the Privy Council was communicated to her on the 10th of July. On the next day she wrote to Lord Sidmouth to inform him that it was her intention to be present, and to demand 'that a suitable place might be prepared for her reception.' Lord Sidmouth simply referred her to her previous correspondence with Lord Liverpool, and added a pointblank refusal to the queen's last request. Baffled by the Ministry, the queen applied to the Duke of Norfolk and the Archbishop of Canterbury, desiring the former, as Earl Marshal, to have persons in attendance at the Abbey to conduct her to her seat; and intimating to the latter her desire to be crowned some day after the king, and before the arrangements were done away with, so that no extra expense might be incurred. The Earl Marshal replied through his deputy that he had submitted the application to Lord Sidmouth,

And to attend the coronation.

CHAP. VI. 1821.

and that he could not have the honour of obeying her Majesty's commands. The Primate answered that he could take no part in the ceremony of her Majesty's coronation, except by 'orders from the sovereign.' Marshal, Primate, and Ministry all had decided against the queen's claim. The queen would have been wise to have submitted to their decision.[1]

Her protest.

But Caroline of Brunswick had no intention of confessing herself defeated. She had never yet flinched from any difficulty; and she had advisers whose determination was equal to her own. On Monday, the 16th of July, she addressed the Primate and the Earl Marshal of England. She received their replies on the following morning. On the day on which she received them she signed a formal protest and remonstrance, prepared by her advisers, in which she narrated her claim and recapitulated her grievances. 'The Queen, like your Majesty'—so a portion of this document ran—'descended from a long race of kings, was the daughter of a sovereign house connected by the ties of blood with the most illustrious families in Europe; and her not unequal alliance with your Majesty was formed in full confidence that the faith of the king and the people was equally pledged to secure to her all those honours and rights which had been enjoyed by her royal predecessors. In that alliance her Majesty believed that she exchanged the protection of her family for that of a royal husband and of a free and noble-minded nation. From your Majesty the Queen has experienced only the bitter disappointment of every hope she had indulged. In the attachment of the people she has found that powerful and decided protection which has ever been her steady support and her unfailing consolation. Submission from a subject to injuries of a private nature may be matter of expedience, from a wife it may be matter of necessity, but it never

[1] *Ann. Reg.*, 1821, Chron. p. 325.

can be the duty of a queen to acquiesce in the infringement of those rights which belong to her constitutional character.'

The queen signed the remarkable protest from which these extracts have been given on Tuesday, the 17th of July. On the following day Westminster was busy with the preparations for the great pageant of the morrow. Long before daybreak on the Thursday the streets from Charing Cross were thronged with foot-passengers, while two strings of carriages were conducting their fortunate occupants to the places which had been assigned to them either in the Hall or in the Abbey. The sun rose in its full summer glory about four in the morning; the rising of the sun was saluted by salvoes of artillery from the boats on the river, while the bells of St. Margaret's Church welcomed the opening day with a merry peal. The illustrious occupants of the carriages converging on the Abbey and the Hall became impatient of the long delays to which they were subjected, and, descending from their vehicles, mingled, decked as they were with plumes, silks, and jewellery, with the enormous multitude which surrounded the Abbey walls. The good-humoured mob gazed with pleasure on the splendid and grotesque dresses, which looked doubly splendid and grotesque by the side of their own attire. 'Nothing,' said a contemporary annalist, 'could be more impressive than the good order and quietness which everywhere prevailed.' The good order was remarkable, for the temper of the mob was to be subjected to one great trial. Very early in the morning the hum of distant voices announced the approach of some personage of importance; the indistinct hum, gradually acquiring distinctness, foretold the arrival of the queen.

The queen refused admission to the Abbey.

The queen had left her house in South Audley Street at five o'clock in the morning. Six bay horses drew her coach of state. Lady Hood and Lady Anne Hamilton sat opposite to her Majesty; Lord Hood followed in his

CHAP. VI. 1821.

own carriage. A large crowd swarmed through South Audley Street and Hill Street to witness her Majesty's departure. The crowd thronged her carriage as it wound its way through Park Lane, Piccadilly, Constitution Hill, and St. James's Park to Dean's Yard, Westminster. The soldiers presented arms as her Majesty passed; the air rang with the acclamations of the assembled people; a few cries of disapproval were drowned in the shouts which greeted her approach. She was witnessing for the last time 'the powerful and decided protection' of the people, which had ever been 'her steady support and her unfailing consolation.' Her coachman drove on to Palace Yard, where a temporary platform stopped the way, and it was impossible to drive any further. Descending from her carriage with her ladies, and leaning on Lord Hood's arm, her Majesty, after much difficulty, proceeded to the door entering the Abbey at Poets' Corner. Lord Hood demanded admission for the queen; the doorkeeper quietly answered that he could admit no one without a ticket. Lord Hood had a ticket in his pocket; but the doorkeeper declined to admit more than one individual. Lord Hood asked the queen whether she would enter alone. For the first time in her life her Majesty hesitated and turned away. Her doing so was the signal for the decision of the crowd. Faint notes of disapproval had been audible amidst the shouts of applause which had welcomed her Majesty on her drive from South Audley Street to Palace Yard. The fashionable portion of the company, at window and in gallery, had ventured to mark their disgust on her arrival at the Abbey. The crowd itself which had surrounded her had displayed feelings rather of curiosity than of approval. Her success would have probably stimulated their cheers; her failure only provoked their laughter. Her Majesty might have said with James of Scotland in the poem:—

> Who o'er the herd would wish to reign,
> Fantastic, fickle, fierce, and vain?

But she still preserved a calm demeanour, and, entering her carriage, amidst shouts of 'Shame!' and 'Off!' drove home—to die.

The scene in Westminster Abbey.

In the meanwhile the heralds were marshalling the procession in Westminster Hall. Led by a sergeant, in a scarlet mantle, first came the children of the King's Chapel, the children of the Abbey choir, the gentlemen of the King's Chapel, in scarlet; the choir of Westminster, in white surplices. The Dean of Westminster bore the splendid crown, which sparkled with precious stones; the first prebendary bore the golden orb, the second prebendary the golden sceptre surmounted with a dove, the third prebendary the sceptre royal, the fourth prebendary St. Edmund's staff, the fifth prebendary the chalice and the patina, the sixth prebendary the Bible. Precisely at ten o'clock a single gun, fired from a man-of-war in the River, announced the arrival of his Majesty and the commencement of the ceremony. Dean and prebendaries, passing the choristers, made their obeisances to the king and delivered the regalia to the Lord High Constable. A second gun was fired at half-past ten. At that hour, preceded by maids and messengers, trumpeters and kettledrums, dignitaries of the Bar and dignitaries of the Church, Knights Commanders and Knights Grand Crosses, Judges and Councillors, by his son-in-law, by his five brothers, by the regalia, borne by the most exalted of his subjects, the king moved from the Hall to the Abbey. A canopy of cloth of gold, carried by the Barons of the Cinque Ports, was over his head. His train was borne by eight youths, the least exalted of whom was heir-apparent to the senior earldom of the kingdom. Thus preceded and thus supported, the king walked from his throne in Westminster Hall to his chair of state opposite the altar in the Abbey. The Abbey was brilliant with the rich apparel of the ladies who had been admitted to it, and the splendid uniforms of the

CHAP. VI. 1821.

foreign ministers. Its old roof rang with the shouts of welcome and the anthems of the choristers. The Primate presented the king to the people; the king, kneeling at the altar, made his oblation—a pound weight of solid gold. The Litany was read; a sermon was preached by the Archbishop of York; the oath was administered; the king was anointed; the sword of state was girt upon him, solemnly returned to the altar, and redeemed for a hundred shillings by the senior peer. The Dean of Westminster placed the armill round his Majesty's neck and put the robe royal on the king. The Archbishop delivered the golden orb into the king's hand, and placed the king's ring on the fourth finger of his right hand. The Lord of the Manor of Worksop presented a pair of rich gloves to the king; the Archbishop committed the sceptre with the cross to the king's hand; and finally, amidst the shouts of the people, the pealing of the trumpets, and the firing of guns, placed the crown upon the king's head. The Dean of Westminster gave the Bible to his Majesty; the peers did homage; all the people cried 'God save King George the Fourth!' the king, kneeling at the altar, received the Sacrament, and the ceremony in the Abbey terminated.[1]

The scene in Westminster Hall.

The ceremony in the Abbey lasted from eleven in the morning till four in the afternoon; and the ceremony in the Abbey was succeeded by a still more splendid display in Westminster Hall. The noble Hall wore a new aspect on the day of the coronation. Two tiers of galleries, supported by twenty iron pillars, were crowded with the fortunate persons admitted to witness the spectacle. Six dinner-tables, each fifty-six feet long, accommodated the numerous guests who had the honour of being bidden to the banquet. Twenty-eight magnificent lustres, each containing sixty wax candles, were suspended by chains of gold from the angels in the roof. The king's throne was placed immediately under the south window of the Hall,

[1] *Ann. Reg.*, 1821, Chron. pp. 339–380.

and six gilt Gothic elbow-chairs were prepared for the other members of the royal family. The first course was ushered in with a magnificent procession, in which Lord Howard of Walsingham, as Deputy Earl Marshal; the Duke of Wellington, as Lord High Constable; and Lord Anglesey, as Lord High Steward, rode on horseback. The course being served, the entrance was again cleared, and young Dymoke, hereditary Champion of England, mounted on a horse borrowed from Astley's Theatre, rode into the Hall, threw down his gauntlet, and delivered his challenge. These and other ceremonies being completed, the company proceeded to the discussion of the princely banquet which had been served up to them. One hundred and sixty tureens of soup, one hundred and sixty dishes of fish, one hundred and sixty hot joints; more than three thousand other dishes—side-dishes, dishes of cold meat, dishes of pastry, dishes of vegetables—had been prepared for the company. More than eight hundred dozens of wine and one hundred gallons of punch were provided at this magnificent feast.

A stronger head than that of George IV. might easily have been turned by the events of the day. All the rank, all the beauty, all the worth of the kingdom had been collected to do him honour. He had been the centre of a temporary adoration which falls to the lot of few men. The greatest of his subjects had thought it an honour to perform for him the offices of menial servants. Lord Hertford, the Lord Chamberlain, had brought him his shirt in the morning; the Duke of Wellington, as Lord High Constable, had ridden in the procession which served his dinner in the evening. The company bidden to Abbey and Hall had been dressed with a magnificence which even George IV. had never previously witnessed. Prince Esterhazy, in particular, 'glimmered like a galaxy;'[1] and

[1] Sir W. Scott, in Lockhart's *Life*, p. 456. Scott could not learn positively whether the prince had on the renowned coat which is said to

CHAP. VI. 1821.

Abbey and Hall rang with acclamations loud enough and long enough to do honour to the most virtuous of princes. The choir brought the banquet to a close by singing the anthem, '*Non nobis, Domine.*' Princes and courtiers, prelates and ministers had on that day given the honour, not to God, but to the king.

The glories of the Abbey and the Hall were necessarily reserved for the greatest of his Majesty's subjects. Long, however, after the banquet in the Hall was concluded the people enjoyed the festivities which had been prepared for them. London was in a blaze with brilliant illuminations. A brig-of-war, decked from stem to stern, was moored off the Strand. Fireworks of the most magnificent description were displayed in all the parks, and fire-balloons cast additional brightness on the scene. It was computed that five hundred thousand persons shared, in some way or another, in the festival; and amidst this vast aggregation of people there was no riot, no disorder, no ill-humour. London had indulged in a universal revel, and the revel had been marred by no disturbance. The festivities, however, did not end with the fireworks in Hyde Park. At the close of the succeeding week the king held a levée and a drawing-room, and received the cordial congratulations of the foreign ministers and of his own subjects. Never had levée or drawing-room been more crowded. Never had a larger company assembled to do honour to the king.[1]

The king arranges to visit Ireland.

The enthusiasm with which the king was everywhere greeted was partly stimulated by another cause. Since his accession to the throne the king had contemplated paying a visit to his subjects in Ireland; and his intentions in this respect were warmly encouraged by all

be worth 100,000*l.* The coat seems to have been preserved till 1838, when it was apparently seen by 'Mr. Barney Maguire'—

'Twould have made you crazy to see Esterhazy
All jools from his jasey to his di'mond boots.'

[1] *Ann. Reg.*, 1821, Chron., pp. 108–112, 324–391.

classes of politicians. One hundred and thirty years had passed since a king of England had landed on the shores of Ireland. The last king who had paid Ireland a visit had come to place himself at the head of his victorious battalions. The state of Ireland was at least as critical in 1821 as on the landing of William III. in 1690. But George IV. came, not on a mission of war, but with the hope of inspiring peace. Nor was a journey to Ireland in 1821 an easy matter for a person accustomed to the luxuries to which George IV. had habituated himself. An ordinary passenger, dining in London on one day, may now count as a certainty on breakfasting in Dublin on the following morning. But in 1821 men thought themselves fortunate if they completed the journey in three days' time, and without any serious accident. The magnificent road which Telford has constructed through the valleys of the Dee, the Llugwy, and the Ogwen was still incomplete. The Menai Straits had not been spanned; and passengers from Wales to Anglesey had to encounter the exposure and the risk inseparable from crossing a narrow strait in an open boat. The most direct road to Ireland was by Holyhead; but the most comfortable method of reaching Ireland was to go to Portsmouth. The king drove down to Portsmouth on the last day of July. He embarked on board his yacht on the same evening. But before he reached his journey's end serious and unexpected news awaited him. The queen had never recovered from the disappointments and the fatigue which she had endured on the 19th of July. She had made one more effort to be crowned before the decorations were removed from the Abbey, and she had met with one more repulse. She still, indeed, preserved her gaiety; but she was worn out with fever and vexation. A few days after the coronation she was 'dancing, laughing, and romping' with a large party in her own house; but her excitement was evidently unnatural, her spirits over-

CHAP. VI. 1821.

strained. Two or three days afterwards she was taken ill at Drury Lane Theatre. On Wednesday, the very day on which her husband was leaving Portsmouth, her physicians were apprehensive of danger. On the Thursday she was so ill that she was advised to make her will. A slight rally on the Saturday caused her attendants, rather than her physicians, to hope for her recovery. But the acute symptoms, which had been subdued for the time, returned with new force on the Tuesday morning. Enfeebled by fever and inflammation, her Majesty had no strength to rally against this new attack. The pain, subdued for a moment by an opiate, returned with fresh violence. The queen sank into a stupor, and, after lying two hours in that state, died.[1]

The queen's death.

The death of the queen was regarded by the ministers as 'the greatest of all possible deliverances, both to his Majesty and the country.'[2] It can hardly be doubted that king and cabinet felt that they were relieved by her death from constant embarrassment; but it was almost immediately apparent that her death had caused other difficulties which could not have arisen in her lifetime. While she lived the people had begun to forget her grievances; when she died all her former popularity at once returned. It soon became known that she had desired to be buried in Brunswick. It soon became known that she had desired her coffin to be inscribed, 'Here lies Caroline of Brunswick, the injured Queen of England.'[3] A sense of her injuries, the recollection, perhaps, of their own recent neglect of her, roused the passions of the populace, and it was decided to organise a great demonstration in honour of her Majesty's funeral. The Government, in the meanwhile, made their own arrangements. They decided that the queen's remains

[1] *Ann. Reg.*, 1821, p. 119. Denman, vol. i. p. 188.

[2] Lord Londonderry to Lord Eldon; *vide* Twiss's *Eldon*, vol. ii. p. 432.

[3] *Ann. Reg.*, 1821, Chron., p. 392.

should be conducted, on the seventh morning after her death, from Hammersmith to Harwich, and embarked at that port on board the 'Glasgow' frigate. The procession was to be escorted through the metropolis by a squadron of the Horse Guards; and cavalry reliefs were to be stationed at Romford, at Chelmsford, and at Colchester. Her Majesty's ladies protested against the haste with which these arrangements were made; Lady Hood entreated that the military escort might be countermanded, and that her Majesty's remains might be left to the protection of the people, who had been her 'only friends in her lifetime.' Remonstrance and appeal were alike in vain. The Ministry refused to reconsider any portion of their arrangements or to postpone for an hour the funeral procession. Every part of their plan was firmly adhered to. CHAP. VI. 1821.

The morning of the 14th of August was very unseasonable. The rain fell in torrents; and the drenching downpour seemed calculated to cool the enthusiasm of the mob. A wet day had often marred a popular demonstration, and pouring rain promised on the present occasion to render effectual assistance to authority. An unseemly altercation arose, indeed, at the very outset. Her Majesty's executors firmly prohibited the removal of the body. The undertaker insisted on performing the orders which he had received from the Government. Authority prevailed: the procession was formed. It was announced that it would proceed through Hammersmith and Kensington; turn to the left near the Church, and so pass on to the Uxbridge Road, through Tyburn Turnpike, down the Edgeware Road and the New Road to Islington. Led by the Horse Guards, the procession moved on till it reached the spot where the old church at Kensington has lately been replaced by a modern structure. Drawn across Church Street, twenty deep, the populace barred the road to the left; the main road towards Lon- Her funeral.

CHAP. VI.

1821.

don was left open. It was in vain that the constables endeavoured to force a passage through the people. The people stood firm, and their firmness prevailed. The procession moved on to Hyde Park Corner, where it again attempted to wheel to the left. The people again resisted; but the troops prevailed. The head of the procession was turned from the City towards Cumberland Gate. But the populace were not prepared to abandon the contest. A desperate attempt was again made, near the spot where the Marble Arch now stands, to turn the procession once more towards the City. The populace assailed the troops with mud and stones. The troops fired upon the mob. Powder and lead, backed by discipline and authority, gained a victory. Two men, Honey and Francis, were shot dead, and the procession moved on.

Authority had so far prevailed. Lord Sidmouth had willed that her Majesty's remains should not pass through the City, and Lord Sidmouth's directions had been so far complied with that the funeral procession was passing down the Edgeware Road. Powder and lead had had their way; and, at a cost wholly disproportioned to the end, the object had been partially attained. But, though a temporary victory had been won, the contest had not been decided. The vociferations of the multitude which surrounded the procession pointed to the necessity for employing more force. Force was not again necessary till the troops arrived at Tottenham Court Road. Every avenue to the East was totally blocked with wagons, carts, and dense masses of the people. The avenues to the City were alone open. Powder and shot would have been powerless to force a way through the formidable barricades which thus arrested the progress of the procession. In sheer despair the troops turned down Tottenham Court Road, and, passing through Drury Lane, reached the forbidden precincts of the City. The Lord Mayor placed himself at the head of the procession; no

further resistance was attempted; and the remains of the unhappy queen were allowed to proceed to Romford and Harwich.

All classes of the people were excited to an extraordinary degree by the news of these discreditable proceedings. The Radicals compared the conduct of the troops with the proceedings of the military at Peterloo, and wrote of the 'spirit-stirring massacres of Manchester and Cumberland Gate.' Calm-judging men laid the blame on the Ministry, and thought their spite and their conduct incredible. The Ministry laid the blame on the police magistrate, Sir R. Baker, and removed him from his situation as a punishment for his irresolution. Sir Robert's solitary offence was that he had consented to the procession turning down Tottenham Court Road. The friends of the queen rejoiced at the victory of the people; the friends of the king clamoured for the punishment of the queen's supporters. The majority of these, indeed, were independent of the Government; but one person, who had made himself conspicous in the procession, was an easy mark for their resentment. Sir Robert Wilson had taken an active part in the procession; and he was, in consequence, removed from his commission in the army.

Sir R. Wilson removed.

The gentleman, who was thus selected to feel the full weight of the king's displeasure, was a very distinguished officer. He was the son of Wilson, a painter of repute; and his military service had commenced, when he was only sixteen years old, in the Low Countries. Since then he had been almost continuously employed on active service. He had assisted in quelling the Irish rebellion of 1798; he had taken a part in the discreditable campaign of 1799; he had had a share in the glories won by British valour in Egypt in 1800. He had served in the Brazils in 1805; he had been present at the capture of the Cape of Good Hope in 1806. He had been attached to the com-

CHAP. VI. 1821.

bined armies of Prussia and Russia from Pultusk to Friedland; he had commanded the advanced guard of Beresford's army in the Peninsula. He had been again employed as military attaché to the Russian Court in 1812; and he had done good service in the decisive campaign which rolled back the battalions of Napoleon from the Elbe to the Rhine. Nor were his military services, great as they undoubtedly were, his only claim to the gratitude of his fellow-countrymen. He had written the best account which had yet appeared of the Expedition to Egypt; he had written the only available description of the character and composition of the Russian army; he had kept, though he had not published, diaries of the campaign of 1812. His distinguished services had recommended him to the electors of Southwark, and at the general election of 1818 he had been returned for that borough. He had been re-elected at the general election of 1820.

Sir Robert Wilson was probably more gallant than discreet. He had already incurred the displeasure of the Court by assisting Lavalette to escape from France. Lavalette was one of the distinguished Frenchmen who, in the brief interval between the return and the fall of Napoleon, had betrayed the cause of the king and espoused that of the emperor. For a similar treachery Ney had been put to death; for his own treachery Lavalette was condemned to die. An heroic wife changed her clothes with her husband, and Lavalette, in disguise, escaped from his prison. But, though he was able to reach the outside of the prison in safety, the search for him became every day more rigorous. Lavalette dared not leave Paris, and concealment in Paris was daily becoming more difficult. An appeal was suddenly made to Sir Robert Wilson to facilitate Lavalette's escape; and, with the assistance of two other British subjects, Sir Robert succeeded in doing so. His generous conduct exposed him to a prosecution in France and to a three

months' imprisonment. It elicited an expression of marked disapproval from the Regent. But the public in general paid no attention either to the verdict of the French Court or to the censures of their own prince. They were almost unanimous in recognising that Sir Robert Wilson had done a generous action, and they almost universally commended him for his generosity.

Such was the man who was selected to bear the brunt of the Regent's displeasure. Sir Robert Wilson was dismissed from the service. The folly of the Ministry in assenting to his dismissal was as marked as the indiscretion of the officer which had in the first instance provoked it. A liberal subscription was at once raised for a gallant soldier who was now regarded as a martyr, and the liberality of the public fully compensated Sir Robert for the loss of his professional emoluments. The opinion of the public on the unhappy events which had marked the queen's funeral was displayed in other ways. Coroners' juries were, of course, assembled on the two unhappy men who had fallen at Cumberland Gate. One of the juries returned a verdict of manslaughter against the troops in general; the other a verdict of manslaughter 'against a Life Guardsman unknown.'[1] The passions of the multitude had been temporarily allayed by the splendid fêtes with which the coronation had been celebrated. They were again excited by the folly of the Ministry which was responsible for the deplorable bloodshed at Cumberland Gate.

The king reaches Ireland.

In the meanwhile the king was at Holyhead, anxiously expecting news from London. It was obvious that he could not make his public entry into Dublin while his wife was on her deathbed, and he was compelled, therefore, to wait impatiently either for her death or her recovery. The news came: the queen was dead; and on Saturday, the 11th of August, before she was 'cold in her

[1] *Ann. Reg.*, 1821, Hist., p. 128.

CHAP. VI. 1821.

grave,' as Byron put it in the tremendous philippic which he wrote on the occasion, the king crossed over to Dublin. The wind was contrary; and the king, leaving his yacht, embarked on board the 'Lightning' steam-packet. A favourable passage of only six hours brought him to Howth. His carriage was in readiness for him; but the citizens generally had not expected his arrival. A signal gun, however, announced that he had touched the Irish shore. The Irish poured forth from street and alley to welcome his arrival. The king, who had been drinking all the way from Holyhead to Howth, was in a condition of rollicking good-humour.[1] He shook hands with scores upon scores of his subjects who crowded round his carriage; and, surrounded by the multitude, drove slowly to the Phœnix Park. There he addressed the people in one of the most singular speeches which ever proceeded from the mouth of a monarch. He thanked them all; he thanked them for escorting him to his very door; he might not be able to express his feelings as he wished; he had travelled far; besides which peculiar circumstances, known to them all, had occurred, of which it was better at present not to speak; he left it to delicate and generous hearts to appreciate his feelings. Generous and delicate hearts were the very last which could have appreciated the feelings of the monarch at the death of his injured wife. They might have imagined that, on the first tidings of her death, her husband might have had the decency to forget his own feelings and to think a little of her wrongs. Had they any such anticipations the king's next sentence must have rudely disabused them. 'This,' the king went on, 'this is one of the happiest days of my life. I have long wished to visit you. My heart has always been Irish. From the day it first beat I have loved Ireland.' The lying compliment was fol-

[1] Fremantle, repeating the gossip of the day to Lord Buckingham, says he was 'in the last stage of intoxication.'—Buckingham's *George IV.*, vol. i. p. 194.

lowed by one touch of truth. 'Go and do by me as I shall do by you—drink my health in a bumper. I shall drink all yours in a bumper of good Irish whisky.'

The king remained in Ireland for rather more than three weeks. During the whole of that time his appearance was everywhere welcomed with enthusiasm.

> Is it madness or meanness which clings to thee now?
> Were he God—as he is but the commonest clay,
> With scarce fewer wrinkles than sins on his brow—
> Such servile devotion might shame him away.
> Ay, roar in his train! let their orators lash
> Their fanciful spirits to pamper his pride.

The scathing satire with which Byron celebrated the occasion was justified by the extraordinary enthusiasm which the king everywhere excited. From his first arrival at Howth to his last departure from Dunleary the Irish were never tired of pouring out to welcome him and to cheer him. In compliment to him the name of the port from which he embarked to England was changed from Dunleary to Kingstown; and statesmen seemed justified in anticipating that the happiest consequences would result from the royal visit. It will be necessary in a future chapter to relate the miserable disappointment which followed these anticipations. The boisterous greeting with which the Irish had welcomed George IV. was, in fact, no more trustworthy than the favourable breeze which wafted the king from the shores of Ireland. The royal squadron sailed from Kingstown for Portsmouth on Wednesday, the 5th of September; but contrary winds compelled it to return, and it did not reach Milford Haven till the following Sunday. It was detained in Milford till Tuesday, the 11th, when it sailed with the hope of reaching the Land's End. But the appearance of the morning was again deceptive. As the night came on the wind shifted, a violent tempest arose, and the royal party were glad to put back to Milford, where

CHAP. VI.

1821.

they arrived on the afternoon of Wednesday, the 12th. A whole week had been consumed in the journey from Kingstown to Milford; and, sick of the sea, the king left his yacht and proceeded by land to London. On the 20th of September he again left England, on a visit to his Continental Kingdom of Hanover.[1]

[1] The king's reception at Hanover was less uproarious than his greeting in Ireland; and His Majesty was disappointed at German phlegm. 'What does he think of his German subjects?' asked some one on his return. The reply was peculiarly happy—'He is "Tacitus de moribus Germanorum."'

INDEX

TO

THE FIRST VOLUME.

ABB

ABBOT, Charles. *See* Colchester
Abbott, Mr. Justice, afterwards Lord Tenterden, presides at first trial of Hone, 462; made Chief Justice, 464
Abingdon, corruption in, 145
— Lord, buys seat for Oxford, 145
Academical Society suppressed, 436
Acland, Sir Thos., one of the House of Commons deputation to the queen, 581
Adams, Dr., counsel for king in 1820, 587
— a retired soldier, one of the Cato Street conspirators, 526; turns king's evidence, 528
Addington. *See* Sidmouth
— Dr., Lord Sidmouth's father, 280
— Hiley, 282, 306
Addison, 325; his views on the stamp duty on newspapers, 380
Administration, Liverpool, defeated in 1816 on property tax, 409; and on other subjects, 411; their repressive measures in 1817, 432; their press prosecutions, 458, 461; their weakness in 1819, 486, 487; members of, scattered through Europe on eve of Peterloo, 505; their advice to the Regent after Peterloo, 511; on point of dissolution in 1820, 564; decide on proceedings against the queen, 581; contempt felt for, after the queen's trial, 604
Admiralty, Registrarship of Court of, 149; salaries of secretaries to, 411
Agriculture, improvements in, 165; beneficial effects of the war on, 400; distress of classes engaged in, in 1816, 416
Albemarle, Lord, reception of regiment in which he was serving, after Waterloo, 222
Alexander, Czar of Russia, his character, 16; his views of government, 17

ARU

Algiers, description of, 227, 229; Ximenes' expedition against, 228; Charles V.'s expedition against, *ib.*; burned by the French, 229; ultimatum delivered to, 231; expedition against, 232; bombarded, 234
Alien Act, the, 474; of 1818, 475
Alison, Sir A., his erroneous views on finance, 491
Alliance, the Holy, formed by Alexander, at the instigation of Madame Krudener, 16
America, discovery of, 114. *See* also United States
Anderson, the author of the 'History of Commerce,' 340
Anglesey, no contest in, for fifty years, 138
— Lord, his place at the coronation, 615
Anson, Admiral, 225
Appleby, Lord Lonsdale's borough, 137, *n.*; Lord Liverpool elected for, 274; Tierney sits for, 309
Apprentices, parish, 186, 401
Arden, Lord, his sinecure, 149
Argyll, Duke of, marries the Duchess of Hamilton, 80
Arkwright, Sir R., his invention of the water-frame, 60, 130, 169, 240; synchronous with Adam Smith's researches, 330; his origin, 464
Armada, the destruction of, 225
Armour, the Statute of, 218
Arms, seizure of, bill for the, 519
Army, the, 217; history of, 218; unpopularity of, 218, 219; gradual increase of, 222; patronage in, 223; bill to punish attempt to seduce persons serving in it, 435
Arundel, borough of, 141; Romilly member for, 316

ASH

Ashburton, Lord, Bentham's 'Fragment of Government' attributed to, 333
Assaye, battle of, 264
Assessed taxes, the, their amount in 1792, 45
Athlone, Tierney sits for, 309
Austen, Jane, 376
Austerlitz, its consequences, 23, 128
Austin, William ('Villikin'), his parentage, 250; adopted by the Princess of Wales, 553
Australia, its population in 1816, 115
Austria, effects of the Revolutionary War upon, 7; her losses during the war, 9; her acquisitions in 1815, 11; her exhaustion, 12; Venice allotted to, 17
Avon, the river, its advantage to Bristol, 78

BAILEY, Dr., attends Princess Charlotte, 535
Baker, Sir R., police magistrate in London, removed for conduct at queen's funeral, 621
Bakewell, his improvements in agriculture, 166
Bamford, 'the Radical,' his arrest in 1817, 466, *n.*; his conviction and sentence, 512, *n.*
Bandon Bridge, Tierney sits for, 309
Bank of England, founded by Paterson, 47; its history and privileges, *ib.*; its suspension of cash payments (*see* also Cash Payments and Currency), 48; its position in 1815, 484
Bankes, Mr., patron of Corfe Castle, 141
Bankruptcies in 1817, 417; in 1818, 478
Barbadoes, Lord Seaforth Governor of, 149
Barbarossa, Horuc and Hayradin, their piracies and achievements, 228
Barbary, the States of (*see* also Algiers), 227
Baring, Sir Francis, answers Boyd's currency pamphlet, 480
Barnes, Thomas, editor of the 'Times,' 381
Barracks, erection of, 221
Barrington, Shute, Prince Bishop of Durham, 173
Barrow, its condition in 1815, 107
Bathurst, Bragge, Lord Sidmouth's brother-in-law, 280, 282, 303; his character and career, 305; succeeds

BLA

Canning at the Board of Control, 604
Bathurst, Bishop of Norwich, 173
Bayley, Mr. Justice, presides on Peterloo trial, 510
Beaufort, Duke of, his Parliamentary influence, 137
Beaumont, his duel with Lambton 156
Beccaria, originator of the greatest happiness principle, 334
Beddoes, Dr., assists Davy, 74
Bedford, Duke of, his Parliamentary influence 137; sells Camelford, 143; his description of the distress of, in 1816, 417
Bedfordshire, education in, 213
Beeralston, borough of, 141
Belfast, its progress in the nineteenth century, 99
Belgium annexed to Holland in 1815, 17
Bell, Dr. Andrew, his new system of education, 215, 216
— Henry, builds the 'Comet,' 92
— Mr., his inventions for printing calicoes, 64
Benbow, Admiral, 225
Bentham, Jeremy, his 'Panopticon,' 203; his career and works, 332, 337, 368
Bentinck, Lord W., his offices, 147
Bergami, Bartolomeo, his engagement as courier to the Princess of Wales, 548; his rapid promotion, 551; his relatives, 552
Berkshire, its disproportionate representation, 134; increase of rental in, 166; education in, 212
Berthollet, M., his experiments in bleaching, 64
Bethnal Green, distress in, 181
Beverly, E. of, pluralities held by his son, 174; patron of Beeralston, 141
Bideford, riot at, 419
Bilston, men of, draw loaded wagons to London, 422
Birch, constable, shot by the Radicals, 505
Birkenhead, condition of, in 1816, 107
Birmingham, two days' journey from London in 1745, 87, and cf. 106; its history, population, and trade, 106; distress in, in 1816, 422; Sir C. Wolseley elected legislatorial attorney for, 505
Black, 327, 347
'Black Dwarf,' the, prosecution of, in 1817, 459
Blackstone, his opinion of the Game

BLA

Laws, 159; his 'Commentaries' and Jeremy Bentham, 332
Blackwood,' its publication and its publisher, 390
Blanketeers, march of the, 440
Blood-money, system of, 206
Boadicea, 371
Bolingbroke, Lord, 325
Bolton adopts the cotton manufacture, 55
Bombay, imperfect communication with England, 93; ceded to England, 124
Bona, massacre at, 231
Bonnymuir, the battle of, 530
Bon Repos, Pierre Riquet de, his Canal of Languedoc, 79
Boroughs, Parliamentary, *See* House of Commons
Borroughs, his exploits, 123
Boswell, Sir A., his death in a duel, 156
Boulton, Mr., of Soho, his connection with Watt, 71; promotes trade of Birmingham, 106
Boyd, Mr., his letter on the currency, 480
Bradford, dependent on the wool trade, 52
Bramber, borough of, 141
Brandreth, the Nottinghamshire Captain, 446
Brevium Custos, office of, the patentees, 149
Bridewell. *See* Prisons
Bridge building, the use of iron in, 86
Bridgewater, Duke of, his career, 79; his introduction to Brindley, 81
Bridges, London, 96
Bridport, riot at, 419
Brighton Poor Bill, 189
Brindley, James, his early career, 80, 169; introduction to the Duke of Bridgewater, 81
Bristol, its advantageous situation on the Avon, 78; defeated by Liverpool, 100; its population in 1815, 107; meeting at, after Peterloo, 513
Britain, her position in 1815, 18; her previous history, 19; her persevering efforts in the Revolutionary War, 23; her position at its close, 24; description of, *ib.*; population of, in 1815, 25
Brougham, H., sits for Camelford, 143; stands for Liverpool, 144; his quarrel with Canning, 156; his account of land enclosures, 165; his character and career, 310, 387; his

BUR

autobiography, 312; his article on Byron, 362; his article on Spain, 389; procures repeal of property tax, 408; his attack upon the Regent, 411; his account of the distress of 1816, 417; his hatred of the Radicals, 426; proposed as member of the Bank Committee, 487; his opinion of the Ministry in 1819, 515; adviser to the Princess of Wales, 558; prevents the princess returning to England in 1819, 561; treats the omission of the queen's name from the Liturgy as a trifle, 565; appointed Attorney-General to the queen, 567; desires to compromise the queen's case, 568; joins the queen at St. Omer, 570; his apprehensions on her return, 574; his advocacy of her case in the House of Commons, 576; conducts negotiations for a compromise, 578; prepares the queen's answer to Wilberforce's address, 581; at the trial, 588; his cross-examination of Majocchi, 589; his speech, 590; applies Milton's description of Satan to George IV., 593; urges queen's claim to be carried before Privy Council, 608
Brougham, Peter, killed in a duel, 155
Brunt, a shoemaker, one of the Cato Street conspirators, 528
Buckingham, Marquis, afterwards Duke of, his Parliamentary influence, 137, 283; advocates repressive legislation in 1819, 516, 523
Budget, the, of 1816, 406; of 1817, 453; of 1818, 469; of 1819, 499
Bullion, the, Committee of 1810, 49
Bunyan, John, 325
Buonaparte, Joseph, defeated at Talavera, 265
Burdett, Sir F., challenged by Canning, 156; his arrest in 1810, 318; returned for Westminster, 476; his Reform motion in 1819, 503; his career, *ib.*
Burdon places an iron bridge over the Wear at Sunderland, 86
Burgess, Bishop of St. David's, 174
Burgoyne, Sir J., his capitulation, 127
Burke, Rt. Hon. E., supports Wilberforce on the slave trade, 120; his account of capital felonies, 1. 3; his testimony to Howard, 199; an example of the reaction due to the French Revolution, 336, 345
Burney, Dr., 375

BUR

Burney, Frances, 375, 376
Burns, poetry of, 347, 353
Burrard, Sir R., signs the Convention of Cintra, 264
Busaco, battle of, 265
Bute, election for, 139
— Lord, his Ministry, 20, 242
Butler, author of 'Hudibras,' 325
Butter, Nathaniel, publishes first printed paper, 380
Buxton, Mr., his house occupied by Lancashire magistrates, 507
Byng, Sir George, 225
— Sir John, his command at Manchester in 1819, 441
Byron, Lord, account of the distress in England, 182; his poetry, 362, 368; his hatred of Castlereagh, 433; one of the queen's friends, 602

CALCUTTA purchased by the English, 124
Caledon, Lord, his borough of Old Sarum, 141
Calthorpe, Lord, his opinion and vote at queen's trial, 596; his borough of Bramber, 141
Cambridge, Duke of, opposes Wilberforce on the slave trade, 260; his marriage, 538; increased allowance to, 539
Cambridgeshire, pauperism in, in 1816, 420
Camden (Lord Chancellor), 'Fragment on Government' attributed to, 333
— Lord, Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, 290
Camelford sold to Lord Darlington, 137; sold by the Duke of Bedford, 143
Campbell, Bishop of Sodor and Man, 173
— Lady Charlotte, her attendance on the Princess of Wales, 550
— John (afterwards Lord), writes for 'Chronicle,' 383
— Thomas, his description of Britannia, 224; his poetry, 349; contributes to 'Chronicle,' 383
Camperdown, Lord, his victory, 225, 240
Canada, its population in 1816, 115
Canals, the introduction of, 78; founded by Duke of Bridgewater and Brindley, 79; the canal from Worsley to Manchester, 81; the Bridgewater Canal, 82; subsequent canals, 83; the Ellesmere Canal, 86
Canning, Rt. Hon. George, his duel

CAR

with Castlereagh, 156, 295; challenges Burdett, and nearly fights Brougham, 156; his retirement in 1809, 271; his character and career, 293; his opinion of Bathurst, 307; assists in starting the 'Quarterly,' 389; his description of the 'revered and ruptured' Ogden, 467, *n.*; disliked at Oxford, 489; refuses to be a party to proceedings against the queen, 563, 576; his retirement in 1820, 601
Canning, Stratford, a London merchant, provides an education for his nephew George, 292
Canterbury, the queen's reception at, 572
Cape of Good Hope, its importance as a naval station, 113; advantages resulting from its discovery, 114; Capetown founded by the Dutch, 115; conquered by England, *ib.*; emigration to encouraged in 1819, 501
Capellen, Admiral, joins in the expedition against Algiers, 233
Capital punishment, 191; offences punished by, 192; Lord Ellenborough's defence of, 194
Cardiganshire, uncontested for 100 years, 138
Carlisle, Lord Lonsdale's influence in, 137; apprehended riots in, in 1819, 502
Carnarvon, Lord, his question on the queen's trial, 588
Caroline, Princess, afterwards queen, her marriage with George Prince of Wales, 249; Delicate Investigation, 250; her court, 251; the Milan Commission, 539; leaves England in 1814, 547; her travels, 548; her connection with Bergami, 551; announces her intention to return to England, 561; her name omitted from the Liturgy, 562; refused a guard of honour at Rome, 565; her letter from Rome, 566; her journey home, 569; rejects the overtures of Brougham and Lord Hutchinson, 571; her triumphal progress to London, 572; the 'green bag' presented, 575; the negotiation of a compromise fails, 579; rejects Wilberforce's address, 581; Bill of Pains and Penalties, 583; her progress to the trial, 585; bill read a second time, 596; divorce clause retained, 597; addresses to, 600; carries her claim to be crowned to the Privy Council, 608; her claim

to be present at the coronation, 609; her protest, 610; goes to the Abbey, 611; her last illness, 617; her death, 618; her funeral, 619
Caroline, Queen, witnesses against; their reception, 584
Cartwright, Rev. E., invents the power loom, 63, 130, 240
— Major, the Father of Reform; his opinion of the 'Black Dwarf,' 460; his advice in 1819 at Birmingham, 505, *n.*
Cash payments. *See* also Currency. Effect of suspension of, 403; their suspension continued, 484, 486; decision of Bank committee to return to, 490
Cassilis, Lord, his statement as to destitution in Ayrshire, 502
Castle, the informer, 427; his evidence about Spa Fields riots, *ib.*
Castlereagh, Lord, his duel with Canning, 156, 295; his retirement in 1809, 271; his character and career, 288, 294, 322; Byron's description of, 364; Shelley's description of, 366; his 'ignorant impatience of taxation' speech, 409; his unpopularity in 1817, 433; procures appointment of Finance Committee in 1817, 449; introduces the Six Acts, 516; proposes a select committee on queen's conduct, 576; conducts king's side of the negotiation with the queen, 578
Cathcart, Lord, commands at Copenhagen, 264
Catherine de Medici, 371
Cato Street conspiracy, 524, 526
Cavendish, his discoveries in physical science, 327
— his exploits in Elizabeth's reign, 123
Chantrey, Sir F., his parentage, 169
Charlemont, Lord, Grattan's patron, 299
Charles II., legislation during the reign of, 185; his formation of a standing army, 219
Charles V., his expedition to Algiers, 228
Charlotte, Queen, her origin and marriage, 245; her pure court, 372; disapproves Duke of Cumberland's marriage, 537; her death, 542
Charlotte, Princess, her birth and character, 252; her engagement to the Prince of Orange, 253; broken off, 254; her position in 1816, 533; her marriage with Prince Leopold, 534; her death, 535

Chartists, the, their objects, 430
Chatham, first Lord, his Ministry, 19; dismissal of, by George III., 243
Chelsea, St. Luke's, built, 472
Cheshire uncontested for 100 years, 138
Chester, its port superseded by Liverpool, 102
Chinese, the first inventors of canals, 78
Chippenham, the election petition, 146
'Chronicle,' the 'Morning,' 383
Church, the, of England, 171; non-residence in, 172; pluralities in, 172; patronage in, 173; the country clergy, 176; supremacy of, 177; Byron's description of, 364
Churches, grant for new, in 1818, 471
Churchill, 325
Cibber, 'tuneful,' 326
Cinque Ports, Lord Wardenship of, given to Lord Liverpool, 275; its salary, 450
Cintra, Convention of, signed, 264, 295
Claremont, purchased for Princess Charlotte, 534
Clarence, Duke of, afterwards William IV., admires Caroline of Brunswick, 249; his numerous love affairs, 255, *n.*; opposes Wilberforce on the slave trade, 260; his marriage, 538; increased allowance to, 539, 540, and *n.*; pensions to his illegitimate children, 539, *n.*; his children, 541; at the Queen's trial, 586; Denman's attack upon, 594; sits on Privy Council on Queen's claim to be crowned, 608
Clarendon, Lord, his history, 325
Claret, high price of, 157
Clarke, Mary Ann, 257
Clarkson, Thomas, his crusade against slavery, 120
Clerkenwell. *See* Prisons
Cleveland, Lord, his Marquisate, 137
Clinton, Sir W., forced to resign his seat for Newark, 142, *n.*
Clive, Lord, his career, 19, 124, 127
Clubs, Spencean and Hampden, &c., 430, *n.*; advise strong measures in 1817, 439, 440
Clyde, the, its importance to Glasgow, 100, 103; salmon in, 103
Coal, difficulties in working, 73
Coalbrook Dale, Darby's works in, coal used for smelting iron at, 72
Coalition Ministry, the, of 1873, its India Bill, 125
Cobbett, William, his character and career, 391; his flight in 1817, 439

COC

Cochrane, Lord, his election for Honiton, 145
Cockermouth, Lord Lonsdale's borough of, 137, *n.*
Coke, Mr. (afterwards Lord Leicester), a game preserver, 158
Colchester, Tierney sits for, 309
— Charles Abbot, first Lord, his estimate of the population of Ireland, 26; his estimate of the cost of living, 160; his character and career, 316; his description of reporters, 383; his description of the Princess of Wales at Genoa, 562
Coldbath Fields. *See* Prisons
Coleridge, S. T., his poetry and his career, 356; writes for the 'Post,' 382; for the 'Chronicle,' 383
Colonies, the British, in 1816, 111
Columbus, the motive of his discovery, 113
Como, residence of the Princess of Wales at, 251
'Comet,' the, the first steamer, 91
Committee, the Finance, of 1817, 449; its reports, 449, 452; of 1818, 469
Committees, secret, of 1817, 433; their reports, 442; of 1818, 465
— — of House of Lords on the queen's conduct, 576
Commons, House of, its increased influence in the seventeenth century, 133; constant changes in composition of, 134; takes issue of writs into its own hands, 134; majority of its members returned by a few persons, 135; its patrons, 136; various franchises of boroughs, 140; traffic in boroughs, 142; chief clerkship of, 149
Consols, price of, in 1818, 467, 478
Control, Board of, instituted by Pitt, 125
Cooke, Mr., a member of the Milan Commission, 556
Cookesley, Dr., his patronage of Gifford, 390
Copenhagen, battle of, 226; bombardment of, 264
Copley, Sir John (afterwards Lord Lyndhurst), at the queen's trial, 587; sums up evidence against queen, 590; his reply, 595; resists queen's claim to be crowned, 608
Corfe Castle, borough of, 141
Corn Laws, their origin and history, 161; the bill of 1814 defeated, 167
Cornwall, Romans obtained tin from, 71; its disproportionate representation, 134, 135

CUS

Cornwallis, Lord, his Indian career, 125; his capitulation in America, 127; Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, 291
— Lord, Bishop of Lichfield, 173
Coronation, the, of George IV., 611, 613
Corry, Mr., Chancellor of Exchequer in Ireland, his duel with Grattan, 302
Cotton, the history of the manufacture, 54; its growth, 55; the inventions which have developed it, 57
— Rev. M., ordinary of Newgate, his description of transported persons, 195, and of prisoners, 198
— Yard, witnesses against the queen lodged in, 584
'Courier,' the, 382; announces Canning's resignation, 603
Coventry, Lord, marries Miss Gunning, 79
Cowley, his poetry, 325
Cowper, his poetry, 326
Crabbe, his description of the clergy, 177; of the poor-house, 183; of the poor, 184; his poetry, 348
Craven, Hon. Keppel, chamberlain to Princess of Wales, 547; leaves the Princess, 550; his evidence, 593
Crime, increase of, 191; in London, 199
Croft, Rev. J., pluralities held by, 175
— Sir R., attends Princess Charlotte, 535; his death, 535, *n.*
Cromarty, electors of, 139
Crompton, Samuel, his invention of the mule, 61, 130, 240
Cumberland, Duke of, 256; opposes Wilberforce on the slave trade, 260; his marriage, 536; Parliament refuses an increased allowance to, 537
Currency, paper, its existence and effects, 46; first suspension of cash payments, 48; amount of before 1797, 48; in 1800, 49; in 1810, *ib.*; its depreciation, *ib.*; effects of, on various classes, *ib.*, 403, 480; effects of Orders in Council on, 480; effects of Spanish American war on, 481; made legal tender, 484; reflections on, 491; inconvenience arising from variations of value, 495; inconveniences of bi-metallic, 497
Curtis, Sir W., presents petition against the property tax, 409; defeated in the City, 476
Customs, the, their origin and growth, 38; their produce in 1792, 45

DACRE, Lord, his motion for a hearing of the queen's counsel, 582
Dalrymple, Sir H., signs the Cintra Convention, 264
Darby's iron works in Coalbrook Dale, coal used at, 72
Darlington, Lord. (*See* also Cleveland.) His Parliamentary influence, 137; his account of the distress of 1816, 419; his apprehension of an insurrection, 519
Davenant, his economical writings, 161
Davidson, a negro, one of the Cato Street conspirators, 526; executed, 528
Davy, Sir H., his early career, 73, 169; invents the safety lamp, 74, 130, 240; his opinion on the introduction of gas, 98, *n.*
Debt. (*See* also Sinking Fund.) The National, its amount in 1816, 28, 33, 46; its origin, 30; its rapid increase, 31, 44; gloomy anticipations at its increase, 32
— the Irish in 1816, 414
— imprisonment for, 196, *n.*
De Clifford, Lord, his opinion and vote on the queen's trial, 596
Defoe, his writings, 325
Demont, Louise, her evidence against the queen, 592
Denbighshire, no poll books in, 138
Denman, Thomas (afterwards first Lord), appointed Attorney-General to the queen, 567; his opinion of Alderman Wood, 569; refuses to allow Mrs. Denman to call on the queen, 574; his defence of the queen in the Commons, 581; applies description of Iago to Leach, 582; at the trial, 588; reception of, at Cheltenham, 590; his opinion of Brougham's peroration, 591; his speech, 594; interrupted in a speech by prorogation, 599; urges the queen's claim to be crowned before Privy Council, 608
Derby, the Brandreth riot at, and the conviction of the rioters, 446
Derbyshire, no contest in, for twenty years, 138; Derbyshire riots, 446
De Ruyter sails up the Thames, 225
Devonshire, its disproportionate representation, 134
Diaz, Bartholomew de, his discoveries, 113
Dissenters, disabilities of, 178
Dissolution, the, of 1818, 474, 476; of 1820, 524
Distress in 1816, 181, 404, 417; grants in aid of, in 1817, 454; in 1819, 502
Dorsetshire, its disproportionate representation, 134; distress in, in 1816, 420
Dover, the queen's reception at, 571; reception of the witnesses against at, 584
Downshire election, cost of Lord Castlereagh's, 289
Drake, his exploits, 123
Dryden, his poetry, 325
Dublin, its population in 1815, 98; its situation and university, 99; communication with London in 1827, 100; reasons which interfered with its growth, 100
Dudley, 'Dud,' discovers a mode of smelting iron with coal, 72
Duels, 155; famous, 156, 302
Dundas, Hon. Robert (afterwards Lord Melville), supports the 'Quarterly Review,' 389
Dundee, its importance as a seat of the linen trade, 66
Dunwich, borough of, 141
Durham, members given to by Charles II., 134
Dutch, the, their trade with India, 124; their naval superiority in the seventeenth century, 225; join in the expedition to Algiers, 233
Dymoke, the Champion, his office at the coronation, 615

EAST INDIA COMPANY, the, its exclusive privileges, 123, 125; abolished, 126
Edgeworth, Maria, her account of illicit stills in Ireland, 210; her novels, 375
Edinburgh, its situation, population, and history, 104
'Edinburgh Review,' the, 384, 386
Education, elementary, in 1816, 211; disliked by the upper classes, 214
— of the higher classes, 151; promoted by political causes, 152; defects in, 153; at the Universities, 154
— in Scotland, 213
Edwards, George, informs against the Cato Street conspirators, 527; leaves the country, 529
Eldon, Lady (Miss Surtees), her elopement and marriage, 278
— Lord, sinecures enjoyed by his family, 148; condemns battue shooting, 158; his parentage, 168; his defence of the Criminal Code,

194; his character and career, 276; Shelley's description of, 366; his account of the distress of 1816, 419; his opinion of the Peterloo massacre, 509; his views in 1819, 515; at the queen's trial, 587; mobbed in Ringwold, 590
Election, the general of 1818, 476
Eliot, his defence of Gibraltar, 111
Elizabeth endeavours to check the growth of London, 94; the people her army, 218
Ellenborough, Lord, sinecures enjoyed by his family, 148; supports the Criminal Code, 194; his character and career, 319, 323; unable to read the 'Wealth of Nations,' 331; presides at the trials of Hone, 462; his retirement, 463
— second Lord, his opinion and vote at the queen's trial, 596
Ellis, George, supports the 'Quarterly Review,' 389; sells Claremont, 534
Ely, diocese of, pluralities in, 175; riots at, in 1816, 421
Emigration encouraged by the Government in 1819, 501
Enclosures, land, 164
England, her fortunate situation, 108; the causes of her prosperity, 109
Erskine, Lord, at the queen's trial, 586; affected at Brougham's peroration, 591
Esterhazy, Prince, his magnificence, 615
Estimates, attack upon in 1816, 406
Eton, education at, 153; Canning and Lord Wellesley at, 293; Shelley at, 364
Exchequer, Teller of, 149, 450
Exchequers, consolidation of British and Irish, 413
Excise, the, its origin during the Commonwealth, 37; its revival in the reign of Charles II., 37; its produce in 1792, 45
Exe, the, its use to Exeter, 78
Exeter, its situation on the Exe, 78
Exmouth, Lord, his parentage, 169; his career, 230; his expedition against Algiers, 231; his account of the distress of 1818, 448

FACTORY ACT, the first, 188, *n.*
Falmouth, Lord, his influence in Truro, 141; his opinion and vote at the queen's trial, 596
Fardell, Rev. H., pluralities held by, 175

Fielding, his writings, 374
Fife, electors of, 139
Finance. *See* Committee, Finance
Fisher, Bishop of Salisbury, 173
Fitzherbert, Mrs., her marriage with the Prince of Wales, 247
Fitzwilliam, Lord, his Parliamentary influence, 137, 138; made Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, 289; recalled, 290; removed from Lord Lieutenancy of Yorkshire, 514; appointed to conduct negotiation for the queen, 578
Fletcher, Andrew, of Saltoun, 374
Flinn, Lieutenant, his connection with the Prince of Wales, 550; his evidence, 593
Flintshire, no contest in, for twenty years, 138
Flogging of women abolished, 204, and *n.*
— in the army, 222
Flood, his secession from the popular cause in Ireland, 300; his quarrel with Grattan, 301
Fludyer, Sir S., Romilly's godfather, 315
Foley, Lord, his Parliamentary influence, 137
Forbes, Lady Elizabeth, 549; leaves the Princess of Wales, 550
Fox, Rt. Hon. C., supports Wilberforce on the slave trade, 120; elected before he was of age, 152; contradicts prince's marriage with Mrs. Fitzherbert, 247; refused office by George III., 269; minister, *ib.*; death of, 286; his dislike of the 'Wealth of Nations,' 331
France, her position in 1815, 2; the Revolution of 1789, 4; the rise of Napoleon, 5; the defeat of the Empire, 7; her population in 1793 and 1817, 27; her settlements at Pondicherry, 124
Francis Emperor of Austria, his views of government, 17
Frederick King of Prussia, his views of government, 17
Freehold estates not subject to contract debts, 170
Fremantle, his opinion of the weakness of the Ministry in 1819, 486; in 1821, 604; on the 'beauty' of the Royal brides, 538
Frome adopts the cotton manufacture, 55
Fry, Elizabeth, her labours in prison reform, 201, 216
Fulton introduces steam navigation in America, 91

GAM

GAMA, Vasco de, his discoveries, 113
Game Laws, the, 157; their failure, 160; convictions under, 210
Game, sale of, 158
Gargiulo, his evidence against the queen, 592
Gas used as an illuminating agent, 97; London lit with, 98
Gell, Sir William, chamberlain to the Princess of Wales, 547; leaves the Princess, 550; his evidence, 593
Genoa annexed to Piedmont in 1815, 17
Gentleman, the old English, 154; his character and sports, 155; his income, 160
George III., his accession, 19; his character and career, 19, 242; effects of his insanity, 244; his love for Lady S. Lennox, 245; his marriage with Queen Charlotte, 246; his opposition to the Roman Catholics, 269; his affection for Lord Eldon, 279; his death, 524, 545
— IV., his influence (as Duke of Cornwall) in Truro, 141; his intemperance, 157; his character, 246; his marriage, 248; Byron's description of, 364; his expenditure, 411; supports the Ministry, 412; assaulted in 1817, 431; bill for protecting his person, 435; approves conduct of Lancashire magistrates at Peterloo, 511; reproves Common Council of London, 513; desires a divorce, 538, 554, 560; his accession, 546; his severe illness, 547; Denman's attack on, 594; his coronation, 606, 613; his visit to Ireland, 616, 624; his visit to Hanover, 626, *n.*
Ghisiliari, Marquis, recommends Bergami as Princess of Wales' courier, 548
Gibbon, Thomas, his history, 341
Gibbs, Sir Vicary, his character and career, 319, 321; unpopular and ill in 1819, 463
Gibraltar, its capture position, and importance, 111
Giddy, Davies, his acquaintance with Davy, 74
Gifford, Sir Robert (Solicitor-and Attorney-General), afterwards Lord Gifford, 464; at the queen's trial, 587; his reply, 596; resists the queen's claim to be crowned before Privy Council, 608
Gilbert, Thomas, steward to the Duke

GRE

of Bridgewater, 81; introduces the duke to Brindley, *ib.*
Gilpin, Mr., one of Lord Sidmouth's tutors, 280
Glasgow, its history, 100, 103; its varied industries, 104; threatened disturbances at, in 1820, 529
— University befriends Watt, 70
Gloucester, Duke of, successful shooting at Holkham, 158
Gloucestershire, dependent on the woollen trade, 52; Roman iron-works in, 71; no contest in, for twenty years, 138
Godwin, Mary, 365
— William, 337, 437
Gold, price of, 403, 480, 481, 485; dependent on foreign purchases, 494; the true basis of value, 496
Goldsmith, his poetry, 326
Gonsalvi, Cardinal, refuses Queen Caroline a guard of honour, 565
Goodenough, Bishop of Carlisle, 173, 280
Gosford, Lord, his opinion and vote at the queen's trial, 596
Grafton, Duke of, his sinecures, 149
Grant, Sir William, Master of the Rolls, resigns, 556
Grattan, Rt. Hon. H., his duel, 156; a member of the Irish Administration, 289; his opposition to the Union, 291; his character and career, 299; his advocacy of Roman Catholic emancipation, 487
Gray, Thomas, his poetry, 326
Greece, Byron's efforts for, 364
Grenville, George, institutes Grenville Committees, 146; minister 20, 243; the Stamp Act, 20
— William, Lord, auditor of the Civil List, 147; his character and career, 282; supports repressive legislation in 1817, 435, 444; his differences with Lord Grey, 477; supports repressive legislation in 1819, 515, 518; suggests the traversing bill, 517; at the queen's trial, 586
— Lady, her pension, 147
— Richard, his marriage with Hester Temple, 283
— Committees instituted, 146
Greville, Charles, his sinecures, 147
— — (son of the foregoing), his diary and his offices, 148; his mention of the general election of 1818, 476
Grey, Lord, his account of England in 1819, 182; his character and career, 282, 323; his difference

from Lord Grenville, 477; his apprehension in 1819, 519
Grote, his 'History of Greece,' 343
Gunnings, the Miss, their beauty, 79; their marriages, 80

HABEAS CORPUS ACT suspended in 1817, 435, 444; suspension terminated, 465
Hackney coaches in London, 97
Hallam, his history, 343, 368
Hamilton, Duke of, his marriage with Miss Gunning, 79
— Duke of, at the Queen's trial, 587
— Duchess of, her engagement with the Duke of Bridgewater, 80
— Lady Anne, 'Joan of Arc,' 553; joins the queen at Montbard, 569; accompanies the queen on her entry into London, 573, and at her trial, 585; her fidelity, 598; neglected, 606; accompanies the queen to the Abbey, 611
— Lord Archibald, his motion on the Scotch boroughs, 487
Hampden Clubs. *See* Clubs
Hampshire, its disproportionate representation, 134
Hanover, George IV.'s visit to, 626, *n.*
— the last King of, his birth, 541
Hardwicke, Lord, Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, 307
Harewood, Lord, his opinion and vote at the queen's trial, 596
Hargreaves, John, his invention of the spinning jenny, 58, 169, 240
Harris, Lord, in command at Seringapatam, 263
Harrison, Mr., his trial for sedition, 505; sentence upon, 512, *n.*
Harrowby, Lord, carries the Curates' Bill, 173; the Cabinet dines at his house on the 23rd of February, 1820, 527; at the queen's trial, 587
Harvest, the, of 1816, 417; of 1817, 448
Haslemere, Lord Lonsdale's influence at, 137, *n.*
Hastings, Warren, his Indian career, 125; advocates the Company's exclusive privilege, 126
Hawke, Admiral, 225
Hayti or St. Domingo, rebellion in, 121
Hazlitt, William, denounces the severity of the Penal Code, 193; writes for the 'Chronicle,' 383
Healy, his conviction and sentence, 512, *n.*

Helston, borough of, Abbot returned for, 317
Henry, Mr., his introduction of a new bleach, 64
Hertford, Lord, his Parliamentary influence, 137; at the coronation, 615
Hertfordshire, no contest in, for twenty years, 138
Hidon, a cowkeeper, one of the Cato Street conspirators, 526; turns informer, 527; rewarded with a hackney carriage license, 529
Holland (*see* also *Dutch*) annexed to Belgium in 1815, 17; her rivalry with England, 238; her share in the expedition against Algiers, *ib.*
— Dr. (afterwards Sir Henry), physician to the Princess of Wales, 547; leaves the princess, 550; his evidence, 593
— Lord, feebly defends Dissent, 473; amends the Traversing Bill, 518
Holyhead, forty-one hours from London in 1815, 87
Hone, William, abortive prosecutions of, 461
Honiton, corruption in, 145
Hood, Lord, accompanies the queen to the Abbey, 611
— Lady, accompanies the queen to the Abbey, 611; protests against escort at her funeral, 619
Hooper, 427
Horner, Francis, his character and career, 313, 386; his death, 477; his article on the currency, 480; obtains the Bullion Committee, 482
Horsham, system of polling in, 145; Romilly represents, 316
Howard, John, the prison reformer, 199, 216
— of Walsingham, Lord, his place at the coronation, 615
Howe, Lord, his victory off Ushant, 225, 240
Howley, Bishop of London, 173
Hownam, Lieutenant, his connection with the Princess of Wales, 550; his evidence, 593
Huddersfield riot in 1817, 443; abortive prosecution of the rioters, 445
Hull, Wilberforce returned for, 118; bribery in, 144
Hulton, Mr., presiding magistrate at Peterloo, 508
Hume, David, his history, 340, 341; his researches, 368
— Joseph, his questions about the queen's allowance, 565
Hunt, 'Orator,' 426; too late for the

HUN

Spa Fields riot, 428, 430; presides at Peterloo, 506; arrested, 508; his conviction and sentence, 512, *n.*
Hunter, John, 327, 347
Huntingfield, Lord, his borough of Dunwich, 141
Huntingford, Bishop of Hereford, 173, 280
Huskisson, Rt. Hon. W., 308; his career, 498; his memorandum on finance, 499
Hutcheson, advocates 'greatest happiness principle,' 334
Hutchinson, Lord, 560; meets the queen at St. Omar, 570
Hutton (the geologist), 327, 347

ILCHESTER purchased by Lord Darlington, 137
Imports and exports, their amount in 1793, 51; in 1815, 51, 116; in 1873, 116; from 1792 to 1815, 402, *n.*; in 1816 and 1817, 448; in 1818, 478
Income and Expenditure. *See* Revenue and Expenditure
— tax, the, its imposition, 46; its repeal, 404, 408
Indemnity, Bill of, in 1818, 466
India (*see* also East India Company), Portugal monopolises the trade with, 122; company formed to trade with, 123; its history from the fourteenth to eighteenth century, 123; trade with, thrown open, 126
Information, *ex officio*, restrictions on, in 1819, 518
Ings, a butcher, one of the Cato Street conspirators, 526; executed, 528
Intemperance, 156
Ireland, her population in 1816, 27; her treatment commercially, 52; franchise in, 139; effects of Church supremacy on, 179; the rebellion of 1798, 290; the Union, 291; Penal Laws in, 300; the Volunteers in, 301; revenues of, 412; bankrupt in, 1816, 413, 415; its condition in 1817, 438; Constabulary force founded in, 438; the Insurrection Act and Peace Preservation Act, 438; George IV.'s visit to, 624
Irish, the, their constant agitations, 100
Iron, its limited use in Britain formerly, 71; Lord Dudley uses coal for *smelting, 72; rapid extension of the iron trade, 72; fall in prices of, 422; distress in iron trade, 422*
Irwell, aqueduct over, 81

LAN

JACKSON, Bishop of Oxford, 174
— Jael, 370
Jamaica benefited by the Hayti rebellion, 116
James I. endeavours to check the growth of London, 94
Jeffrey (afterwards Lord), member of Speculative Society, and founds 'Edinburgh Review,' 385, 386; his duel with Moore, 156
Jena, effects of the battle, 128
Jenner, Dr. Edward, discovers vaccination, 216
Jersey, Lady, the favourite of the Princess of Wales, 248
Joan of Arc, 371
Johnson, Judge, his article on 'Juverna,' 392
Johnston, the Radical, his sentence in 1820, 512, *n.*
Jonson, Ben, his writings, 325

KAY, John, his invention of the fly shuttle, 57
— Robert, his invention of the drop-box, 57
Kendal, dependent on woollen trade, 52
Kent, its disproportionate representation, 134
— Duke of, 256; opposes Wilberforce on the slave trade, 260; his marriage, 538; increased allowance to, 539; his death, 544
Kenyon, Lord, sinecures enjoyed by his family, 148; moves for hearing for queen's counsel, 588
King, Lord, his paper on the currency, 480; insists on his rents being paid in gold, 483
— Rev. Mr., his description of Bethnal Green in 1816, 181
Knaresborough, Tierney sits for, 309
Kuss, Barbara, her evidence against the queen, 592
Krudener, Madame, persuades Alexander to form the Holy Alliance, 16

LABOURING classes, unfortunate condition of, in 1816, 401, 416
La Hogue, battle of, 225
Lamb, C., writes for the 'Post,' 382
Lambton, J. W., his duel with Beaumont, 156
Lancashire, no contest in, for twenty years, 138; its alarming condition in 1819, 502

LAN

Lancaster, Joseph, establishes a school on Bell's principle, 215
Landed classes, their influence, 161; increase of rents, 166; declining influence of, 167; privileges of, 170; their willing acceptance of Protectionist doctrines, 329; their influence decreased by the teachings of the economists, 340; Byron's description of, 364; distress of the, 416
Languedoc, the Canal of, 79
Lansdowne, Lord (Sir H. Petty), Finance Minister, 270; his interest in Romilly, 316
La Place testifies to the value of vaccination, 217
Lascelles, influence of the family in Yorkshire, 138
— Lord, stands for Yorkshire, 146; made Lord Lieutenant of Yorkshire, 515
Lauderdale, Lord, his protest against a gas bill, 97; present at the queen's trial, 587
Lavalette, assisted in escape from Paris by Sir R. Wilson, 622
Law, Bishop of Chester, 173
Lawrence, Col., his Indian career, 124
— Sir T., his parentage, 169; one of the queen's friends, 602
Leach, Sir John, 555; made Vice-Chancellor, 556; instigates Milan Commission, *ib.*; advises George IV., 563; Denman applies description of Iago to, 582
Lead, Romans obtained from Wales, 71
Leeds, its population in 1815, 107; Reform meeting at, in 1819, 505
— Duke of, his influence in Helston, 141; nominates Abbot for Helston, 371
Leith separated from Edinburgh in 1815, 105
Leopold, Prince of Saxe Cobourg, his marriage with Princess Charlotte, 534
L'Estrange, Col., in command at Peterloo, 508
Lewis, 'Monk,' one of the queen's friends, 602
Liffey, Dublin seated on, 99
Lincoln Poor Bill, 190
Lindsay, Lady Charlotte, 547; leaves the queen, 549; her evidence, 593
Linen trade, the, its history, 66
Literature, English, 324; its decline, 325, and rise, 326; effects of French Revolution on, 337; place of woman in, 370; its characteristics in 1816, 394
Littleport, riots in, in 1816, 421

MAC

Liverpool, its prosperity promoted by the Bridgewater Canal, 82; its situation on the Mersey, 100; its rise, *ib.*; its population in 1816, 101; its shipping trade, 102; bribery in, 144; Brougham stands for, *ib.*; petition from, in 1819, for Reform, 503; meeting at, after Peterloo, 513
— first Earl of, 274
— second Earl of, his negotiations about Malta in 1801, 113; his sinecure, 148; elected before he was of age, 152; fails in the Corn Bill of 1814, 167; his Ministry and career, 273, 322; his position in the Portland Ministry, 294; his attack upon Dissent, 473; his desire to retire in 1819, 487; his description of the Seditious Meetings Bill, 522; his recommendation of an increased grant to royal dukes, 540; proposes a secret committee on the queen's conduct, 576; introduces Bill of Pains and Penalties, 583; at the queen's trial, 587; his reply to the queen's claim to be crowned, 607
Living, cost of, 160
London, owes its origin to the Thames, 78; the continuous growth of, 94; its population, 96; its buildings and parks, *ib.*; locomotion in, 97; lighted with gas, 98
— Common Council of, condemn conduct of authorities at Peterloo, 513; petition against proceedings in queen's case, 583
Lonsdale, Lord, his Parliamentary influence, 137
Lostwithiel, borough of, 142
Louis XIV., his reign and its consequences, 3; repeals the Edict of Nantes, 67
Luddite riots, the, origin of the name, 424; of 1816, 424
Ludlam convicted of high treason for Derby riots, 447
Lushington, Dr., at the queen's trial, 588, 595

MACADAM, his system of road repair, 88
Macaulay, Rt. Hon. T. B. (afterwards Lord), his opinion of Southey, 356; his account of Miss Austen and Miss Burney, 376; and of Miss Edgeworth, 378
Macclesfield, transfer of silk trade from Spitalfields to, 68
McCulloch, writes for the 'Chronicle,' 383

MAC

Machinery, effects of, on wages, 401; unpopularity of, 424
Mackintosh, Rt. Hon. Sir J., his description of capital felonies, 193; his mention of Horner, 313; of Romilly, 314; his historical labours, 344; his 'Vindiciæ Gallicæ,' 345; writes for the 'Post,' 382, and 'Chronicle,' 383; his opposition to the repressive measures of 1817, 435; his motion for criminal reform, 487
Madras, Presidency of, 124
Mahometan power, decline of the, 238
Mahratta war undertaken by Lord Wellesley, 262
Maidstone, corruption in, 144
Majendie, Bishop of Bangor, 174; pluralities enjoyed by, 175
Majocchi, Theodore, his evidence on the queen's trial, 589
Malcolm, Sir John, in favour of the East India Company, 126
Malmesbury, Lord, his description of the Princess of Wales, 249
Malt tax, the war, surrendered in 1816, 410
Malta, its history and capture, 112
Malthus, his works and their influence, 338; advocates savings banks, 456, *n.*
Manchester, its prosperity dependent on wool, 52; adopts cotton trade, 55; promoted by the Bridgewater Canal, 82; its previous isolation, 101; its population in 1816, *ib.*; its rapid growth, 102; the Manchester meeting, 440; Borough of Reeve refuses to summon a meeting in 1819, 502; renewed meeting at, 503. *See* Peterloo
— Duchess Dowager of, her sinecure, 149
Mansel, Bishop of Bristol, 173
Mansfield, Lord, the 'Fragment on Government' attributed to, 333
— Countess of, her sinecure, 149
Margaret of Anjou, 371
Marlborough, Duke of, his Parliamentary influence, 137; buys seat for Oxford, 145
Marlowe, his writings, 325
Marylebone, a country village in the middle of the eighteenth century, 95; new park in, 96
Massena opposed to Wellington in Spain, 265
Maxwell, Sir Murray, defeated at Westminster, 476
Melville, Lord, his sinecure, 149

NAD

Menai Straits, the, bridged by Telford, 88
Merthyr, its condition in 1815, 107
Metcalf, John, the blind road maker, 84; constructs the road from Harrogate to Boroughbridge, and builds the bridge at Boroughbridge, 84
Metternich, Austrian minister in 1815, 11
Middlesborough, a moor in 1815, 107
Middlesex, its electoral importance, 138
Middleton, Sir Charles, his advocacy of the slave trade, 118
Milan Commission, the, appointed in 1818, 539; its composition, 556
Military exercises, bill to prevent unauthorised persons practising, 517
Mill, James, 344
Millbank, Miss, her marriage with Byron, 363
— Penitentiary at, 203
Milne, Admiral, at Algiers, 234
Milner, his influence with Wilberforce, 119
Milton, John, his writings, 324
— Lord, stands for Yorkshire, 146
Mitford, William, his 'History of Greece,' 342
Modena placed under an Austrian archduke, 17
Money, its true nature, 491
Monmouth, no contest in, for twenty years, 138
Montagu, Charles, the first British financier, 31, 41
Moore, Sir John, his Spanish campaign, 295
— Thomas, his duel with Jeffrey, 156; his poetry, 360
Morocco. *See* Algiers
Mount Edgecumbe, Lord, his Parliamentary influence, 137; his use of it, 142
Moyle, his paper on the army, 220
Mun, his economical writings, 161
Murdoch, W., of Soho, introduces gas, 97, 130
Murray, John, publishes the 'Quarterly,' 389
— Lady Augusta, her marriage with the Duke of Sussex, 256
Mutiny Act, the first, 221
Myddelton, Sir Hugh, makes the New River, 94

NADIN, Serjeant, his account of the lower orders in 1816, 425,

NAN

431; his conduct at Peterloo, 507
Nantes, Edict of, 3; its repeal, 4, 67
Napoleon I., his rise to power, 5; his fall, 7; his Berlin and Milan decrees, 128; his defeat at Waterloo, 268
Navigation, improvements in the art of, 110
Navy, the popularity of the, 224; discipline in the, 226
Neco, his alleged circumnavigation of Africa, 114
Nelson, Lord, his great victories, 225, 240; his opinion of the strength of Algiers, 232
Newark, members given to, by Charles II., 134
Newcastle, Duke of, his Ministry, 288; his Parliamentary influence, 137; his abuse of it, 142
Newcastle-on-Tyne, riots at, 420
Newcomen, the inventor of a steam-engine, 69; its defects, 70
Newspapers, account of, 379; stamp duty on, 380; position of writers in, 383; immense influence of, 396
Newton, his researches, 368
Nile, the battle of, 225
Norfolk, Duke of, his Parliamentary influence, 137; in Arundel, 141; Queen applies to, at the coronation, 609
North, Lord, his Corn Law of 1773, 163
— Bishop of Winchester, 173
Northumberland, Duke of, his Parliamentary influence, 137; his account of the lower orders in 1817, 431
Norwich, the original seat of the woollen trade, 52; its situation on the Yare, 78; its population in 1815, 107; meeting at, for dismissal of ministers in 1819, 513
Nottingham, meeting at, after Peterloo, 513
Nottinghamshire, uncontested for 100 years, 138
Novels, rare in 1816, 154; effects of, 374

O'CONNELL, Daniel, his duel, 156
Ogden, the 'revered and ruptured,' 467, *n.*
Old Sarum, borough of, 141
Oliver, the spy, 441
Oran, fortress of, 227
Orange, Prince of, his engagement

PER

with Princess Charlotte, 252; broken off, 254
Orders in Council, the British, in 1806 and 1807, 129
Ouse, the, its use to York, 78
Oxford sells its representation, 145
— University of, remits a term on accession of George IV., 154

PAINE, Tom, the character of his works, 337, 345, 437; his plan for an iron bridge, 86
Paley, Dr., his unrewarded ability, 173
Palmer, John, his postal reforms, 90
Palmerston, the Viscount, 303, 308
Parke, James (afterwards Lord Wensleydale), 588
Parker, Admiral, 225
Parliament, members of, paid, 132; influence of landed classes in, 161; prorogation of, after the queen's trial, 599
Paturzo, his evidence against the queen, 592
Paul, Lewis, introduces a new method of carding cotton, 61
Pauperism, in 1816, 420
Peace, first consequences of, 398
Pechell, Captain, R.N., reports on the queen's conduct, 556
Peel, Sir Robert (first Bart.), his origin, 169, 488; his account of apprentice labour, 187, 188; an anti-bullionist, 489
— Right Hon. Sir R. (second Bart.), 41, 303, 308; selected as chairman of Bank committee in 1819, 488; declines office in 1821, 604
Peers, the, their influence in elections, 136; their creation and promotion, 150
Pelham, Bishop of Exeter, 173
— Hon. W., Chief Secretary for Ireland, 290
Pensions, 148; the crown empowered to grant, for political services, 451
Perceval, Right Hon. S., supports bill for subjecting freehold estates to contract debts, 170; his curacy bill, 172; his ministry and character, 272; refuses Chief Secretaryship of Ireland, 290; his position in 1819, 296; offers Chancellorship of Exchequer to Vansittart, 305; his opinion of Bathurst, 307; his intention to consolidate the British and Irish Exchequers, 414; supports Vansittart's currency Resolution in 1811, 482; his patronage of Peel

PER

488; his defence of the Princess of Wales, 557
Perceval, Spencer (son of foregoing), suggests quotation to Brougham at the queen's trial, 593, *n.*
Perry, John, proprietor of the 'Chronicle,' 383
Peterloo, meeting summoned at, 506; the 'massacre,' 508; opinion of the Ministry on, 509; verdicts of juries on persons killed at, 512; sympathy with and subscription for sufferers, 512
Phillips, Sir Jonathan, sells Camelford, 137
Piedmont, Genoa annexed to, in 1815, 17
Pillory, the, abolition of, 204
Pino, General, Bergami's master, 548
Pitt, Right Hon. William, his Ministry, 21; his Sinking Fund, 34; his financial policy, 42; supports Wilberforce on the slave trade, 120; his India bill, 125; his duel with Tierney, 156; his Corn Law of 1791, 163; his Administration, 244, 268; his separation from Lord Grenville, 285; his patronage of Canning, 293; his second Ministry and death, 294; adopts Adam Smith's conclusions, 332; his liberal views, 336; his repressive measures in 1796, 436
Plassey, battle of, 124
Platt, James, confesses that he has procured a man's death by false evidence, 193
Playfair, Professor, 385
Plumer, Sir Thomas, made Master of the Rolls, 550
Plymouth, its population in 1815, 107
Poland, the partition of, 15
Pole, Wellesley (afterwards Lord Maryborough), 303
Police, inefficiency of, 204, 211
Poll, duration of, limited, 145
Pondicherry, French settlement at, 124
Ponsonby, Hon. G., his opposition to the Union, 291; his character and career, 298, 310; his views on retrenchment in 1817, 450; his death, 477
Poor Laws, the, 182; settlement of the poor, 185; discipline under, 189; effects of, 455
Pope, A., 325; his imitators, *ib.*
— the, gives the Portuguese an exclusive trade to India, 115, 122
Population, formerly followed the rivers, 76; its increase at an increasing rate, 108

RAG

Portarlington, Lord, his influence in Portarlington, 339
— Ricardo sits for, 339
Portland, Duke of, sinecures enjoyed by his family, 147; his career and Ministry, 271, 294; retires, 296
Portsmouth, its population in 1815, 107
Portuguese, the Pope gives them an exclusive right to the India trade, 115; they monopolise the India trade, 122; their foothold on India, 124; cede Bombay to England, 124
'Post,' the 'Morning,' 382
Post Office, the, its position in the eighteenth century, 90
Postage, rates of, 90
Powell, Mr., a member of the Milan Commission, 556; sends Restelli out of the country, 592
Powis, Lord, his Parliamentary influence, 137
Prescott's 'Conquest of Mexico,' 356
Preston, his trial and conviction, 427
— education in, 212
Pretender, the, his absence from England, 19
Pretymans, the, preferments enjoyed by, 175
Prices, effects of paper currency on, 403
Priestley, Dr., 327; his advocacy of the 'greatest happiness principle,' 334
Prisons, state of, in 1816, metropolitan, 195; county, 200; construction of, 203
Professions for gentlemen, 155
Property tax. *See* Income tax
Prussia, her short and glorious history, 12; obtains a portion of Saxony, 17
Pulteney, Mr., M.P., befriends Telford, 85

'QUARTERLY REVIEW,' the, foundation of, 389
Quebec, Wolfe's victory at, 124
Queenboro', Romilly elected for, 316

RADICALS, the, 425; their agitation in 1819, 513; odious to most people, 515; defeated at Bonnymuir, 530
Radnorshire, no contest in, for twenty years, 138
Raggazzoni, his evidence against the queen, 592

RAL

Raleigh, Sir W., his place in literature, 325
Ramsay, Mr., his book on the slave trade, 118
Raphael, his imitators, 325
Rates, increase of, 184
Redesdale, Lord (Sir J. Mitford), Speaker and Chancellor of Ireland, 318; his opinion of the Peterloo meeting, 509
Reform, Parliamentary, promoted by locomotive facilities, 132; agitation for in 1819, 502; Burdett's motion for, in 1819, 503; meetings in favour of, 505
Regent's Park and Regent Street, their construction, 97
Reid, his researches, 347
Rennie, Sir J., his improvements in Dublin Harbour, 99; his bridges, 130
Rent (*see* Landed Classes), 166; true theory of, 340
Representation, Parliamentary, inequalities of, 134
Restelli, his evidence against the queen, 592
Revenue and Expenditure (*see* also *Income*, *Excise*, *Customs*, &c.), amount of, in 1792, 35, 44; its growth during the war, 35; its amount at the Revolution, 39; refusal of the Whigs in 1688 to settle it on the Crown, 41; growth of the Revenue during the eighteenth century, 42, 44; not much affected by the Union with Scotland, 43; consequence of the Irish Union, 45; its growth from 1801 to 1815, 46; its amount in 1815, 402, *n.*; in 1816, 406; in 1817, 452; in 1818, 469, 473, *n.*
— — the Irish, its amount in 1800, 45; rapid increase of, after 1801, 46
Revolution, the, of 1688 leads to an increased army, 220
— the French, its causes and its course, 4; reaction caused by, 336
Ricardo, his philosophical works, 339, 368; his pamphlet on the currency, 482
Ridgway, Mr., adopts Henry's bleaching process, 64
Riots in 1816, 419, 420; in 1817, 431, 443; apprehended in 1819, 502
Rivers, their use as roads, 76; the most important English, 77
Roads, neglect of, up to the eighteenth century, 83; defects of, 86; Telford's, 87; Macadam's, 88
Robertson, his history, 341, 347

SAP

Robinson, Sir Christopher, King's advocate, at the queen's trial, 587
— Rt. Hon. F., 303; his character and career, 307
Rockingham, Lord, his position in Yorkshire, 138
Rodney, Admiral, Lord, 225, 240, 243
Roebuck, Dr., associated with James Watt, 71
Roman Catholics, disabilities of, 178; George III. opposed to their removal, 243
Romilly, Peter, father of Sir Samuel, 95, 314; moves to Marylebone, 95
— Sir S., his residence in Gray's Inn, 95; his panegyric on Wilberforce, 121; his parentage, 169; his character, 170; his description of the apprentices, 187; opposes Spilsby's Poor Bill, 190; his criminal reforms, 216; his character and career, 314, 323; his account of the distress of 1816, 419; attacks the Ministry for suspending the Habeas Corpus Act, 465; returned for Westminster, 476; his death, 477; his opinion of Leach, 555
Rooke, Admiral, 225; his capture of Gibraltar, 111
Rosslyn, Lord, Director of Chancery in Scotland, 149
Roxburgshire, election for, 139
Russell, Admiral, his victory off La Hogue, 225
— Lord John, his description of a Liverpool election, 144; elected before he was of age, 152
Russia, her early history, 13; war with the Ottomans, 14; her share in the Revolutionary War, 16; surrender of her fleet in the Tagus, 226
Rutland, no contest in, for twenty years, 138
— Duke of, his Parliamentary influence, 137; the patron of Crabbe, 348
Ryder, Bishop of Gloucester, 173

SADLER, Mr., his election for Newark, 142, *n.*
St. Germans, Lord, his Parliamentary influence, 137
St. Leger, Mr., Princess of Wales' chamberlain, 547, 550; his evidence, 593
St. Vincent, Lord, his victory, 225
Sandwich, Lord, his Parliamentary influence, 137
Sappho, 370

SAV

Savings banks, institution of, 455
Saxony, a portion of ceded to Prussia, 17
Scenery, taste for, recent, 352
Scheele, his experiments in bleaching, 64
Scotland, satisfied with the Union, 19; her progress and population in 1816, 26; the Union, 43; developed by Telford's roads, 87; its inadequate representation, 134, 135, 138
Scott, General, Canning's father-in-law, 295
— of Harden, his contest for Roxburghshire, 139
— Sir Walter, his account of the Roxburgh election, 139; contemplates fighting a duel, 156; his acquaintance with George IV., 247, and with Queen Caroline, 250; his opinion of Canning, 298; his poetry, 350; his opinion of Miss Austen, 378; member of the Speculative Society, 385; his opinion of Horner, 387; contributes to and quarrels with the 'Edinbugh Review,' 388; assists in founding the 'Quarterly,' 389; his account of the distress in 1816, 417, and of the harvest, *ib.*; testifies to the revival of trade, 448; his '*Non mi ricordo*' to the Duke of Clarence, 590
— Sir William (afterwards Lord Stowell), his bill for relaxing the laws of clergy residence, 171; his career, 278
Seaforth, Lord, his employment as a colonial governor, 149
Seditious Libels Bill, 519; its failure, 521
Seditious meetings, bill for preventing, 435, 436; and in 1819, 522
Seditious publications, prosecution of, 456, 457
Sefton, Lord, appointed to negotiate for the queen, 578
Selden, 325
Seringapatam, siege of, 263
Settlement, law of. *See* Poor Laws
Shakespeare, William, 324
Shadwell Poor Bill, 189
Sharpe, Granville, his exertions for the abolition of slavery, 120
Sheffield, its population in 1815, 107
— Lord, his account of the prosperity of 1818, 478
Shelley, P. B., his account of distress in England, 182; his description of the Royal Family, 246; his poetry, 364
Shepherd, Sir S., Attorney-General,

SMI

his prosecution of Hone, 461; passed over for Chief Justiceship, 464
Sheridan, Rt. Hon. T. B., his extravagant estimate of the cost of living, 160; his description of the fall of the Talents Ministry, 270; his praise of Addington, 281; his introduction of Canning to Fox, 293; his position in 1807, 299; one of the queen's friends, 602
Shipping interest, increase of, 109
Shropshire, distress in, in 1816, 422
Sidmouth, Duke of Kent dies at, 545
— Lord (Rt. Hon. H. Addington), sinecures enjoyed by his family, 148; his Ministry, 269; his character and career, 280, 322; his fall, 294; his friends, 306; made Minister, 319; Shelley's description of, 366; buys coal of the distressed colliers, 423; his repressive legislation in 1817, 433; carries bill for suspending Habeas Corpus Act, 435; his communications with Oliver, the spy, 441; his circular on seditious publications, 458; his views in 1819, 515; challenged by Thistlewood, 525; apprised of the Cato Street conspiracy by Edwards, 527; at the queen's trial, 587; refuses the queen a place at the coronation, 609; his directions for the queen's funeral, 620
Sidney, 325
Silk, manufacture of, in England, 66
Sinecures, 148; the Finance Committee of 1817 report on, 450; reductions of, 451
Sinking Fund, the, 34; in 1816, 412; in 1817, 453; in 1818, 473; in 1819, 499; Huskisson's views upon, 499
Six Acts, the, of 1819, 516
Slave trade, the, its origin and history, 116; Act for regulating in 1788, 120; motion for its abolition, 121; abolished, 121; abolition of, opposed by Royal Family, 260; Wilberforce's efforts for its abolition, 470
Slavery, its abolition, 122
Small pox, ravages of, before Jenner's time, 217
Smith, Adam, the father of free trade, 161; the revolution which he accomplished, 327; the 'Wealth of Nations,' 330, 337, 368
— Sydney, first editor of the 'Edinburgh Review,' 385
Smithers, a Bow Street officer, killed in Cato Street, 528; his wife pensioned, 529

SMI

Smithfield, Reform meeting at, in 1819, 505
Smuggling, encouraged by prohibitory duties and Protection, 67, 68; connived at by people, 210
Societies, secret, in 1817 (*see* also Clubs), 433
Society, British and Foreign School, 216; National, 216
Somers, Lord, his admirable policy in 1688, 41; his balancing letter, 220
Somersetshire, its disproportionate representation, 134
Somerville, Mary, 372
Soult, Marshal, opposed to Wellington, 264
Southey, Robert, his poetry and career, 353; his opinion of the press, 357, 384; advises repressive legislation, 434, 439
Southwark, Tierney represents, 309; Poor Bill, 189
Spa Fields, the meeting in, 428; the riot, 429; prosecution of rioters abandoned, 445
Spain, her advantageous position and her dominion, 109; compensated by British Government for abolishing the slave trade, 470
Sparke, Dr., Bishop of Ely, 173; his abuse of patronage, 175; preferment enjoyed by his family, 175
Speculative Society, the, of Edinburgh, 385
Spencean club. *See* Clubs
Spencer, Lord, at the queen's trial, 586
Spenser, his poetry, 325
Spilsby Poor Bill, 190
Spitalfields, French Huguenots settle at, 67; wages of weavers in, regulated, 68
Spring guns, their common use, 159
Stafford, Lord, his Parliamentary influence, 137
Staffordshire, distress in iron and coal trades in, in 1816, 422
Stamp Act, the, its passage, 127
Stamp Duty, the, extended to all periodicals, 521
Steam, its first use as a motive power for machinery, 68
Steam navigation introduced by Fulton and Bell, 91; accidents to steamers, 92; the development of, *ib.*; the 'Enterprise' steams to India, 93; the first steamer crosses the Atlantic, 92, 103
Stephens, his bold voyages, 123
Stewart, Sir Charles (afterwards Lord Stewart and Marquis of Londonderry), his military career, 223

THI

Stewart, Dugald, 385
Stills, illicit, in Ireland, 210
Stockport, Reform meeting at, in 1819, 505
Stocks, parish, their gradual removal, 204
Stoddart, Dr., edits the 'Times,' 381
Strathmore, Lord, his apprehensions in 1819, 519
Strike of the Lancashire spinners, 468
Stuart, Daniel, proprietor of 'Post' and 'Courier,' 382
Sudbury offers itself for sale, 145
Sugden, Sir J. (afterwards Lord St. Leonards), his origin, 464
Superiorities in Scotland, 138
Surajah Dowlah, his short triumph in Bengal, 124
Surrey, its disproportionate representation, 134
Sussex, the railings round St. Paul's cast in, 72; its disproportionate representation, 134
— Duke of, his marriage, 256; opposes Wilberforce on the slave trade, 260; cheered at the queen's trial, 585, 586
Sutton, Archbishop Manners, 173; his abuse of patronage, 174; the queen applies to, respecting coronation, 609
Swanage, pauperism in, in 1816, 420
Swansea, its position in 1815, 107
Swift, his position in literature, 325

TALAVERA, battle of, 265
Talents Ministry, all the, 294
Talleyrand, Cobbett teaches English to, 392
Tavistock, Lord, presents a Reform petition in 1819, 503
Telford, Thomas, his early career, 85, 169; constructs the Ellesmere Canal, 86; his Scotch roads, 87; his bridge across the Menai Straits, 88; his road through Wales, 99, 130; his description of Birmingham, 107
Temple, Hester, her marriage and her posterity, 283
— Lord, 283
Test Act, the, 177
Thackeray, W. M., his character of George III., 245
Thames, its importance to London, 78
Thirlwall, his history, 343
Thistlewood, 426; prosecution against, abandoned, 445; his career, 524; challenges Lord Sidmouth, 525; the Cato Street conspiracy, 526; executed, 528

THO

Thornton, Henry, his paper on the currency, 480
Thurlow, Lord, sinecures enjoyed by his family, 148
Tidd, one of the Cato Street conspirators, executed, 528
Tierney, Rt. Hon. E., his duel with Pitt, 156; his motion for a separate peace, 293; rejected for the lead in 1807, 299; his character and career, 309; as leader, 477; his opinion of the Six Acts, 516; his injudicious speech about the queen in 1820, 565; his protest at the prorogation, after the queen's trial, 599
'Times,' the, 381; printed by steam, *ib.*
Tin, Romans obtained, from Cornwall, 71
Tindal (afterwards Chief Justice), counsel for the queen, 588
Tippoo Sahib, his war with the East India Company, 263
Tomline, Bishop of Lincoln, 173; his abuse of patronage, 175
Tooke, Mr., his support of the currency policy of 1811, 482; condemns Lord King's conduct, 483; his opinion on the effect of foreign purchases on the value of Bank paper, 494
Tories, modification in their policy after 1815, 369
Torres Vedras, lines of, 265
Tothill Fields. *See* Prisons
Trade, improvement in, in 1817, 448, and in 1818, 474, 478
Trafalgar, its effects, 128, 225
Transportation, 195
Travelling, impulse given to, 89, 100; increased facilities in, 132; alteration in mode of, 167
Traversing Bill, the, of 1819, 517
Treasury, the, its influence in elections, 136
Trenchard, his pamphlet on the army, 220
Trent, the, the road to the Midland Counties, 78
Tripoli. *See* Algiers
Truro, election for, in 1818, 141
Tunis. *See* Algiers
Turner, convicted of high treason in Derby riot, 447
— J. M., his parentage, 169, 464
— Sharon, his historical works, 344
Tyburn tickets, description of, 206

WAT

UNION, the. *See* Ireland
— — debating society in Cambridge, suppressed, 436
United States, the, their history, 127; their population in 1776 and 1815, 127; their gain from the European war, 128; they refuse to allow their vessels to be searched, 227; George III. and, 243
Uxbridge, Lord, his Parliamentary influence, 137

VACCINATION discovered by Jenner, 216
Vachel, Rev. Mr., his house demolished by Littleport mob, 421
Vagrants, 208; rewards on conviction of, 209
Vansittart, Rt. Hon. (afterwards Lord Bexley), his character and career, 303, 322; his financial proposals in 1816, 406; surrenders war malt tax, 411; clings to the Sinking Fund, 453; his financial proposals in 1817, *ib.*; his currency Resolution in 1811, 482; his Budget of 1819, 500; outcry against, 501
Vernon, Archbishop, 173
Victoria, Princess (afterwards Queen), her birth, 541, 545
Vimiera, battle of, 265

WAGES, rate of, 180; not increased after war, 401; effects of machinery on, 401; of weavers in Ayrshire, 502
Wales, Romans obtained tin from, 71; riots in the coal and iron trades in, in 1816, 423
Walpole, Sir R., his defeat on the Chippenham election petition, 146
Walter, John, establishes the 'Times,' 381
War, effects of the, on British industry, 399
Ward, J. W. (afterwards Lord Dudley), his opinion of Canning, 298; of the queen's progress to London, 574
Wardle, Colonel, his attack on the Duke of York, 257
Wareham, Romilly represents, 316
Watch, the, in London, 97
Waterloo, battle of, 1, 267
Watermen, in London, 97
Watson, sen., at Spa Fields, 428; acquitted, 430, 445; his boast that 800,000 Radicals were armed, 519
— jun., 427; at Spa Fields, 429

WAT

Watson, Dr., bishop of Llandaff, 173
Watt, Gregory, his acquaintance with Davy, 74
— James, his career, 69; invents the steam engine, 70, 130, 169, 240; his discoveries synchronous with Adam Smith's researches, 330
Wedderburn, Sir A. (Lord Loughborough), replies to the 'Fragment on Government,' 333
Wedgwood, his development of Etruria, 106
Wellesley, Lord, his Indian career, 125; his extraction and career, 261; unable to form a Ministry in 1812, 273
Wellington, Duke of, his duel with Lord Winchilsea, 156; his campaigns, 217; his character and career, 262; Chief Secretary for Ireland, 264; the Peninsular War, 266; Master-General of the Ordnance, 268; Byron's allusion to, 364; conducts the king's side of the negotiation with the queen, 578; hooted at the queen's trial, 587; declines 'the farce' of a county meeting, 601; sits at Council on the queen's claim to be crowned, 608; his place at the coronation, 615
Weobley, represented by Lord Eldon, 278
Westbury, Tierney offers 10,000*l.* for, 309
Western, C., his motion on agricultural distress, 410
West Indies (*see* also Slavery), their importance in 1816, 116; trade with, in 1816 and 1873, 116
Westminster, election for, in 1784, 145; Romilly represents, 316, 476; meeting in, after Peterloo, 513
— Lord, his Parliamentary influence, 137, *n.*
Westmoreland, election for, in 1818, 476; Lord Lonsdale's influence in, 137, *n.*
Wheat, price of, 410, 418, 448, 467, 478
Whitbread, Samuel, his parentage, 169; rejected for the lead, 299; his character and career, 313; advocates savings banks, 456, *n.*; his death, 477; his support of the Princess of Wales, 557; one of her friends, 602
Whitworth, Lord, his negotiations with Napoleon in 1801, 113
Wilberforce, William, his election for Hull, 118; for Yorkshire, 119, 146; his crusade against slavery, 120,

WOR

470; his account of bribery, 145; complains of the Bishops, 174; complains of 'our murderous laws,' 193; his acquaintance with George IV., 247; his opinion of Canning, 297; his description of Whitbread, 314; his opinion of the press, 456, and of Sunday newspapers, 457; his opinion of the queen's progress to London, 574; endeavours to arrange a compromise between the king and queen, 576; carries an address to the queen, 580
Wilde, Serjeant (afterwards Lord Truro), stands for Newark, 142, *n.*; counsel for the queen, 588
Williams (afterwards Mr. Justice), counsel for the queen, 588
Wilson ('Christopher North'), edits 'Blackwood,' 390
— Sir R., his career, 621; dismissed from army for his conduct at the queen's funeral, 623
Wiltshire, its disproportionate representation, 134; increase of rental in, 166
Winchilsea, member for, returned by Lord Darlington, 137
— Lord, his duel with Wellington, 156
Windham, Rt. Hon. W., introduces short service into the army, 222, 270
Wolfe, General, his victory at Quebec, 124, 127
Wolseley, Sir C., elected legislatorial attorney for Birmingham, 505; his conviction and sentence, 512
Wolverhampton, colliers of, draw loaded waggons to London, 422
Women, their place in literature, 370; effects of Christianity on, 370
Wood, Alderman Matthew, 568; joins the queen at Montbard, 569; accompanies the queen on her entry into London, 573
— Robert, tutor to the Duke of Bridgewater, 79
Wool, increased duty on, in 1819, 501
Wooler, editor of the 'Black Dwarf,' abortive prosecution of, 459; his conviction in 1819, 460, *n.*
Worcester, Marquis of, his notice of the powers of steam, 69
Wordsworth, William, his description of a discharged soldier, 223; his poetry and career, 357
Worsley brook, proposal to make it navigable, 80
Wortley, Stuart (afterwards Lord Wharncliffe), defends the appren-

WYN

ticeship system, 188; seconds Wilberforce's address to the queen, 580

Wynn, Charles, his opinion of the measures of the Ministry, 486

XIMENES, his expedition against Oran, 228

YARE, the, its line to Norwich, 78

Yeomanry, the, their conduct at Peterloo, 508, 512; members of, indicted for cutting and maiming, 513

YOU

York, its situation on the Ouse, 78; meeting at, after Peterloo, 513

— Duchess of, 259

— Duke of, recalled from Holland, 151; his intemperate habits, 157; his character and career, 257; his marriage, 259; opposes Wilberforce on the slave trade, 260; attack on, 295; made custos to the king, 542; increased allowance to, 543; at the queen's trial, 586; sits on Council on queen's claim to be crowned, 608

Yorkshire, its electoral importance, 138, 513; expense of election for, in 1807, 146

Young, Dr., his description of 'Narcissa's' funeral, 179

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